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THE WORKERS

WE BREATHE THE HOT AIR, HEAVY WITH THE SMELL OF FRESH SOIL, AND THE SWEAT DRIPS FROM OUR FACES UPON THE DAMP CLAY.

THE WORKERS

AN

EXPERIMENT IN REALITY

BY

WALTER A. WYCKOFF

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL ECONOMY IN PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

THE EAST

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1898

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TO

CHANNING F. MEEK, Esq.

PREFACE

THE preface to a narrative like this must itself be of the nature of a story which will account for the expedition here described, and make clear the point of view from which the experiment was tried.

Enough of the actual setting of the tale is implied in a passing reference to a charming country-seat on Long Island Sound, and the presence there of a fellow-guest, Mr. Channing F. Meek—a chance acquaintance to me then. His wide knowledge of the West, his intimate familiarity with practical affairs, and his catholic sympathy with human nature, made him a man wholly new and interesting to me. And in our talk, which drifted early into channels of social questions, I could but feel increasingly the difference between my slender, book-learned lore and his vital knowledge of men and the principles by which they live and work.

One radiant Sunday morning in midsummer there came to me from his talk so strong a suggestion of the means of acquiring the practical knowledge that I lacked, and in a way that gave promise of an experiment so interesting, and of such high possibility of successful treatment, that in that hour I knew that I was pledged to its undertaking.

No further disclosure of my *animus* is needed than has already been hinted at in the fact of a new, unoccupied, inviting field and the fair prospect which its development offered to a student eager for a place among original investigators. I cannot, however, sufficiently acknowledge my indebtedness to the friends whose generous sympathy has followed me throughout the enterprise—especially that friend already mentioned. To him I owe the first idea of the plan and a large measure of what success has attended its execution.

The narrative form into which I have cast the results of my investigation depends for its value solely upon careful adherence to the truth of actual experience. This account is strictly accurate even to details; apart from confessed changes in the names of the persons introduced,

no element of fiction has intentionally been allowed to intrude.

It only remains to say with reference to my attitude in the experiment itself, that I entered upon it with no theories to establish and no conscious preconceptions to maintain. As sincerely as I could, I wished my mind to be *tabula rasa* to new facts, and sensitive to the impressions of actual experience.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, October 27, 1897.

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THE WORKERS

CHAPTER I

THE ADJUSTMENT

HIGHLAND FALLS, N. Y.,
Monday, July 27, 1891.

THE boss at the work on the old Academic building in West Point gave me a job this morning, and ordered me to come to work to-morrow at seven o'clock. A gang of laborers is fast removing the old building, which is to give place to a new one. From one of the workmen I learned that the men live in Highland Falls, a mile down the river, and so I came here in search of a boarding-house. There was some difficulty in finding quarters, for the place is crowded with workingmen attracted here by the new buildings at the Post and work on the railway.

Mrs. Flaherty has taken me in as a boarder. That is not her name, but it sufficiently indicates her. She came to the door with the odor of soap-suds and boiling cabbage strong upon

her, and told me at first that she guessed that she couldn't take me. She relented when I explained that I had work at the Post; and, having admitted me as a member of her household, she gave play to her natural hospitality. When I was shown to a little carpetless room under the roof, with two double beds in it, I spoke of needing water, and she showed me where I could get a plentiful supply. I said that I should like to write, and she at once invited me from the torrid heat of the attic to a place at her dining-room table.

Here then, in the temporary security of a boarding-house, and as an assigned member of the industrial army, I can review the first week of enlisted service.

I am vastly ignorant of the labor problem, and am trying to learn by experience; but I am so far familiar with Socialistic writings as to know that, from their point of view, I have not gone from one economic class into another. I belong to the proletariat, and from being one of the intellectual proletarians, I am simply become a manual proletaire. In other words, I no longer stand in the market ready to sell what mental ability I have, I now bring to the market instead my physical capacity for work; and I sell that at its market price. Expressed in

every-day language, the change is simply this: from earning a living as a teacher, I have begun to earn it as an unskilled laborer.

But, nevertheless, the change has in it elements of real contrast. One week ago I shared the frictionless life of a country-seat. Frictionless, I mean, in the movement of an elaborate system which ministers luxuriously to the physical needs of life. Frictionless, perhaps, only to those to whom it ministers. Now I am out of all that, and am sharing instead the life of the humblest form of labor upon which that superstructure rests.

This is not a frictionless life in its adjustment to daily needs—very much the reverse. And whatever may be its compensations, they are not of the nature of easy physical existence.

The actual step from the one manner of life to the other was sure of its own interest. It was painful to say good-by on the last evening, and there was enough of uncertainty in the prospect to account for a shrinking from the first encounter with a strange life; but there was promise of adventure, and almost a certainty of solid gain in experience.

At sunrise on the next morning I was ready to set out. I descended quietly to the hall. The butler stood there, politely urging some

pretended necessity as excuse for so early an appearance, and he invited me to breakfast.

Often had he seen me off for a day's fishing or shooting in the old suit which I wore, but I could feel his eye fixed upon me now with perplexed interest. He had heard my expedition discussed at the table, and in some vague way he took in that I meant to earn my living as a workman. With his wonted dignity, he helped me adjust my pack and strap it; and then he stood under the *porte cochère*, and watched me hurry across the lawn in the direction of the highway.

Two hours' walk carried me beyond the point of my acquaintance with the country roads; but this presented no real difficulty, for I had but to keep a steadily westward course. Other details of my expedition were not so simple, and I began to have an uncomfortable sense of unsuspected difficulty. I look back from the vantage-point of a week's experience, with a feeling of amused tolerance, upon my naïve preconceptions. It is like a retrospect of years. My notion of earning a living by manual labor was the securing of an odd job whenever I should need a meal or a night's lodging. Much advice had come my way before I set out. As a means of access to people, I was told to take with me a

book or magazine, and to invite subscriptions. I adopted this plan; and a copy of a magazine was under my arm as I walked on through the dust and heat of the country road, wondering how long it would take me to reach the Hudson, and how I should earn my first meal.

There was nothing at all adventurous or exciting in a dusty walk. My pack was taking on increments of weight with each mile of the journey. I was beginning to feel conscious of change in unexpected ways. There was no money in my pocket, and a most subtle and unmanning insecurity laid hold of me as a result of that. The world had curiously changed in its attitude, or rather I saw it at a new angle, and I felt the change most keenly in the bearing of people. My good-morning was not infrequently met by a vacant stare, and if I stopped to ask the way, the conviction was forced upon me that, as a pack-pedler, I was a suspicious character, with no claim upon common consideration.

In the shade of his porch sat the keeper of a country store, at a fork of the road. His chair was tilted against the outer wall, and his feet rested upon the balustrade. My question as to the course of the two roads before me was responded to by the merchant, first with a look,

and then a spurt of tobacco-juice, which stirred the dust between my feet, and, finally, a caustic sentence to the effect that he 'did not much know, and did not care a damn,' while his blue eyes swept the horizon, and rested finally on the Sound, gleaming golden in the morning sun, and the purple line of the Long Island shore.

The new-born self-consciousness which I found asserting itself was like a wound on the hand, exposed to constant injury. I had walked several miles before I summoned courage to speak to anyone else. Finally, very hot and thirsty, I knocked at the door of an unpainted cottage which stood on the road. The door opened to the touch of an old woman, who bent toward me in the emaciated angularity of a decrepit figure which must once have been strikingly tall and vigorous.

I asked leave to show her the magazine, and she invited me into the cool of her home. The middle floor was covered with a yellow oil-cloth, on which there stood a table. A large cooking-stove occupied one side of the room. A few wooden-bottom chairs were ranged around the walls. An old kitchen clock rested on the mantel-shelf; and on either side of it hung a faded photograph, each in an oval wooden frame.

The old woman asked me to draw up a chair

to the table, and she sat beside me, looking with the excited interest of a child at the pictures which I showed her, but paying little heed, I thought, to what I was saying. Presently, without warning, she veered mentally with the facility of childhood, and now she was looking at me intently between the eyes, while one long skeleton hand lay on the open page before her.

"Be you a pedler?" she asked, and her eyes dilated to the measure of the protruding sockets over which the yellow skin was tightly drawn.

"I am trying to get subscribers for this magazine," I told her.

"Was you raised in these parts?"

My negative gave her the opening for which she was unconsciously feeling. She was born and "raised" on that spot, and had lived there for nearly eighty years, and she hastened to tell me so. There was nothing voluble in the recital of her history, only a directness and simplicity of speech and a certain quiet reserve which rendered the narrative absorbing to us both. Some bond of sympathy began to make itself felt, for she was dwelling on the losses of her life, and, quite unconsciously, she wept as she told me of the death of one and another, until not one of all her family or kindred was left to her, except her grandson, with whom she now lived. She said

no word of complaint; and, in the presence of her human sorrows, she had no memory of poverty, and of the bitter struggle against want which life had plainly been for her. She was sobbing softly, with her head bent upon the table, when she ceased speaking, and no comfort that I could offer her was comparable to the relief that she felt in telling her story. When I arose to go, she was breathing deeply, like a comforted child.

For a stretch of several miles of country road I spurred myself to knock at every door to which I came. My reception was curiously uniform. I never got beyond the request for leave to show the magazine. The reply was invariably a negative; sometimes polite, but always emphatic. Once I did not get so far as that. A portly negress saw me approaching her cottage from the road, and, standing strident on guard before her door, she shouted to me across the meadow that nothing was wanted there, and that I might save myself the walk.

It was nearing noon, and I was very hungry. The question of earning a meal was no longer an interesting speculation, but a pressing necessity. I turned all my attention to that. A large iron gateway leading into a cemetery attracted me. Several ragged, tow-headed children were playing

about the lodge. One of them told me that his father was inside, and he indicated the general direction of the tomb-stones. I found the digger sweating freely in a half-finished grave, and instantly offered my help as a means of earning a dinner. The grave-digger was an Irishman. He leaned at ease upon his spade, and soberly looked me over, and then declined my offer. He was polite, but not at all communicative, and he met my advances with the one remark that his "old woman" was not at home.

A little farther on, I saw three women in pursuit of a hen. I eagerly volunteered my help, and asked for a dinner in payment. They quit the chase, and stood confronting me with serious faces, while I eloquently pleaded my readiness to help them. Nothing in the situation seemed to strike them as strange or irregular, but they touched upon it with short, grave speech, until I had the feeling of something momentous, and I accepted their refusal with a sense of relief.

At last, in the outskirts of the village of Westport, I found a man mowing his lawn, and he was willing to give me a dinner for completing the work. My final success in getting an odd job was a splendid stimulus. I urged the mower over the lawn with a vigor that surprised me,

and the dinner which I ate in the dim corner of an immaculate kitchen was a liberal return for the labor.

All that long summer afternoon I went from house to house, asking subscriptions for the magazine. The rack would have been easier upon my feelings, but I was eager to discover some ready way of approaching people. Not even the loafers at the station were in the least inclined to share their company with me. At nightfall I earned, by sawing wood for an hour, a supper and the right to sleep in an unused barn.

When I awoke, in the early morning, I looked with bewilderment at the dull gray light that shone between the parted boards and through the rifts among the shingles. I came to myself with homesickness in full possession of me, and my back aching from the pressure of that intolerable pack. At the pump in the barn-yard I washed myself, and sat down to eat a slice of cold meat and some pieces of bread which I had saved from supper. An unfriendly collie watched me, and growled threateningly until I won him over with a share of the breakfast.

The village was muffled in a heavy, clinging fog. The buoyancy of the previous morning was gone. It was with some difficulty that I

found the road which had been pointed out to me as the shortest cut across country to the Hudson. I could not shake off the feeling of homelessness and isolation; and, under its influence, the lot of the farmers' boys, whom I met driving their carts to early market, appeared infinitely to be desired. A life of any honest work which accounts for one, and includes some human fellowship, and a reasonable certainty of food and shelter, began to take on undreamed-of attractiveness, in contrast with vagrancy. I felt outside of the true order of things, and as having no contact with any vital current of the world. Perhaps it was in some measure the Philistine in me asserting himself, in the absence of his customary bath and hot coffee; for, as the fog lifted and the sun appeared, I came upon a brook which I had only to follow a hundred yards or more to a well-shaded pool, where the bath was soon achieved, and I emerged feeling that a vagrant life, with some purpose in it, was, after all, rather desirable.

The morning was only fairly begun when I reached the village of Wilton, eight miles from Westport. Already I was tired, and certain muscles of the shoulders and back were in violent revolt. I left my pack at the post-office. Passing up a street, which runs at right angles to

the one by which I entered the village, I presently knocked at the last of a row of comfortable cottages.

When the door opened I knew instinctively that the gentleman who stood framed in it was the village pastor. I said that I was looking for work. He asked me inside. I thought this a curious change of subject, but willingly followed him into a dim sitting-room, fragrant of perfect cleanliness. I explained that I was on my way to West Point in search of work, but was without money, and so obliged to earn my living by the way, and that I would gladly do anything that offered in payment for bread and board. He questioned me closely, with an evident purpose of drawing me out further, and then he abruptly offered me work on his wood-pile, and appeared surprised at my instant agreement.

The wood was green, and the saw, with which it had first to be cut into proper lengths, was not sharp, and it was certainly not skilfully handled. The work was hard, but at noon there was ready for me in the shed, a dinner of beef, and potatoes, and slices of bread, which for lightness and color were like flakes of snow, held by a band of crisp brown crust.

In the afternoon the minister interrupted my work with the request that I would join him in

the house, and he indicated where I could first wash in the wood-shed. I steeled myself for a lecture on the evils of vagrancy, with incidental references to drunkenness as its probable cause in my case. Instead, I found the family seated for an early "tea," and myself invited to a place at the table. I am bound to say that I was rattled. I had expected a meal in the kitchen, and a bed in common with the preacher's horse.

Not the least curious position in which I have so far been placed, was that which I occupied at the minister's board. His family, I shrewdly suspect, did not share his hospitable feelings toward me, and I could venture a guess that it was under protest from them that I took a seat next to the minister's daughter.

She was a pale, delicate girl, of seventeen, perhaps. Her short, brown hair curled close to her head, and her dark eyes looked dimly at you through huge spectacles. The light, crisp stuff in which she was dressed seemed to create about her an atmosphere some degrees cooler than that of the rest of the room.

By way of beginning, I offered some fatuous commonplace about the surrounding country. Instantly I realized that I was not to venture upon a conversation that implied terms of social equality. The child bristled with outraged dig-

nity, and let fall in reply a sharp monosyllable. Further conversation with her would have been highly diverting, but not very considerate, and so I turned to my host, who maintained through the meal the air of one who is on the defensive, but who is sustained by the conviction of doing his duty.

My sympathies were all with the girl. Her feeling was very natural—so natural as to suggest the rather disturbing ideas with which Count Tolstoi is again confronting us. It was a very practical application of the teaching of brotherhood, that of asking a chance workman to a seat at one's family table. But if ministering to Him is really, in part, in such recognitions of the least of His brethren, the instinctive shrinking of the girl brought up in a Christian home in the country was a commentary on our drift from the simplicities of the Gospel.

In the evening I went with the minister to a prayer-meeting in his church. A handful of people sat at solemn intervals in the audience-room. I was plainly the only common laborer among them. The men appeared to be comfortable farmers, and there was a village shopkeeper or two, while the women were clearly their wives and daughters.

In one of the agitating silences which fell

upon the company after the minister had declared the meeting open, I rose and took part; and at the door, when the benediction had dismissed us, several of the men spoke to me cordially. There was entire kindliness in their manner, and they, perhaps, were not conscious of showing surprise in welcoming a laborer to their meeting.

That night the minister insisted upon my taking a bed in his house. I pleaded an early start. He, too, was to be up early, and in the morning I found him in the kitchen before me. On the table were bread and milk; and as I ate I parried the somewhat searching questions of my host.

My course from Wilton lay through Ridgefield and Salem and Golden's Bridge, and then, crossing the line between Connecticut and New York, it made directly for the Hudson River.

This was no great distance; but in the early stages of the march I was much delayed by rains. Driven to shelter, I found it usually in a barn, or a shed under which were housed the farming implements. Here is an example: From a sudden downpour of rain I ran to an open barn. A farmer, whom I found there unhitching his horses, eyed me suspiciously, and gave a halting assent to my request for shelter.

He soon left me alone. I tried to read, and could not. The dull day was deeply depressing. Like the burden of a haunting sorrow the trial of separation weighed upon me. It was not homesickness alone, but added to that a feeling of isolation. Poverty, I had thought, would at once bring me into vital contact with the very poor. Instead, it had made me an object of unfailing distrust. The very poor I found in an occasional cottage of a farm laborer, or some grotesquely dilapidated hovel, swarming with negro life. But they were no more hospitable to my approach than were the well-to-do farmers, and I met not a single vagrant like myself in the course of my walk to the Hudson. I was lonely with the loneliness of a castaway, and I climbed into the hay-loft and fell asleep. Here, at least, was comfort; the deep, dreamless sleep, to which I had long been a stranger, was making gracious advances. When I awoke, the rain was past for the time, and I resumed my journey, with a leaden sky overhead, and soft, clinging mud under foot; but I was strangely refreshed, and walked on quite enheartened.

The intermittent rains interfered with my progress, and increased the difficulty of finding chance work. Repeatedly I was offered a meal, but denied the privilege of working for it. For

twenty-four hours I went hungry, and spent much of that time asleep in a hole which I burrowed into a hay-stack.

But under a brightening sky on Friday, I was given some wood to chop, and the promise of a dinner in payment.

The work was soon done, and to the dinner there was given an added pleasure in the company of one of the two old women for whom I chopped the wood. She sat at the table and talked to me. Perhaps she was solicitous for her spoons. Certainly she was very entertaining. Her dark calico dress fitted closely her thin figure; and she sat very straight in her chair, with her hands folded in her lap, and her eyes bright with gentle benignity.

In all the farming region through which I have passed on my way to the Hudson, I have been much impressed by an unlooked-for quality in the intelligence of the people. The books, of which I now and then caught glimpses in their homes, were often of a surprising range. On the sitting-room table of one farm-house I noticed a Milton, and several volumes of Emerson, and a copy of Stevenson's Essays, besides much current literature. Not infrequently the conversation of these people had in it a curious suggestion of cultivation, curious only because

a dainty choice of words, and the graceful turn of a phrase were accompanied by habitual inaccuracies of speech. They have, for example, their own forms of the verb "to be." "I be" and "You be" are invariable in their common usage. I wondered whether the conventional forms which they find in their reading did not strike them as oddly foreign.

The prim little lady who sat near me through my dinner proved charming. She showed no curiosity about my history, nor the least anxiety to tell me hers. With an air of quiet self-possession she followed the conversation into its natural channels, and sometimes followed it far; for at one time she was describing for me, with admirable vividness, the methods of irrigation in use in Colorado. But she consistently made *done* do duty for *did*, and she used, in some of her sentences, negatives enough to satisfy the needs of negation in the purest of Attic speech.

One more incident of the tramp to the Hudson: Late on Friday afternoon I was nearing Golden's Bridge, a village on the Harlem division of the New York Central Railroad. My road lay over the hills of a rolling farm-region. The fields of corn were radiant with sunlight reflected from great drops of rain which rested on the nodding blades. In the meadows was the

rich sheen of the after-growth. Golden-rod and sumach grew thick on the roadside, and half concealed the rails of the zigzag fences. From the forest there came a breath of fragrant coolness.

After sundown the twilight soon faded into dark. My efforts to secure further work had been unsuccessful. Once I was nearing the ruin of a little wooden cottage, on the porch of which sat a woman enjoying the cool of the evening. Upon seeing me enter the gate she fled within, and slammed the door; and I heard the key turn in the lock. I was growing tired. The actual journey had not carried me far, but the long fast of the previous day and the toilsome walking over soft roads had resulted in exhaustion. Scarcely physical strength remained with which to move farther, and I was ready to throw myself down, with infinite relief, under any chance shelter, when I caught sight of the village lights not a quarter of a mile beyond.

I knocked at the first door on the street. A farmer's wife appeared, and kindly offered to consult her husband on the subject of work. She soon returned with a favorable reply, and invited me to follow her into the kitchen. Carpetless as it was, and stained as to walls and ceiling, and low, and dimly lighted, the shelter

of that room was like softest luxury. A pitcher of milk and some slices of bread were placed on the table, and I ate ravenously.

At one end of the table sat the farmer in his shirt-sleeves, with a newspaper spread before him. He was in the midst of his haying, he said, and had plenty of work, and was willing enough that I should join the other men in the hay-field. The shed for the hands was full, so I offered to go to the barn, and was soon fast asleep on the loose hay in a stall.

As the farmer and I walked to the barn, I had taken occasion to fortify myself in the agreement regarding work. He was an old man, very hale and hearty and genial, and he walked with a curiously stiff movement of the legs, and with his feet nearly at right angles to the line of progress. He set my mind at rest with the assurance that there would be plenty of work for me, if the morning proved good.

The morning was all that could be desired. I got up early, and went to the kitchen, where an Irish maid-of-all-work gave me a bit of soap and some water in a tin basin, with which to finish my preparation for breakfast. She was a beautiful girl, large and awkward and ill-groomed; but her features were strikingly handsome, and her clear, rich complexion would of itself have

constituted a claim to beauty, while sprays of golden hair fell in effective curls about her forehead, and heightened the charm of her deep-set Celtic blue eyes. I was drying my face and hands on a coarse towel which hung on a roller near the kitchen-door, and which was used in common by all of the hired men. She watched me curiously. Presently she ventured an inquiry as to whether "the boss" had given me "a job." I said that he had. "Her eyes were homes" of deep concern, and in her voice was that note of pity so effective in the Celtic accent. She was saying that my hands did not look as though I was used to work. I was blushingly conscious that my hands were against me, but she tactfully tried to relieve the situation by supposing that I was a "tradesman." Then had to come the damaging confession that I was not. But the other hired men now began to enter, and we sat down to breakfast.

A breakfast on a farm is not always the appetizing reality that the inexperienced imagination paints. The cloth, in this case, was ragged, and showed signs of long use since its last washing, and there were no napkins. The service was repulsive in its hideous tastelessness. Flies swarmed in the room, and crowded one another into our food. The men were in their working

clothes, coatless, sleeves rolled up, and their begrimed shirts open at the neck. When our coffee was poured out and handed to us, each used his own spoon in dipping sugar from a bowl which was passed from hand to hand. The butter, in a half-melting condition, and dark with imprisoned flies, was within reach of us all, and each helped himself with his knife, and then used it in conveying food to his mouth. This last feat I did not try. There was in it a suggestion of necromancy, and I had doubts of my success. We ate in silence, as though the gravity of the occasion was beyond speech. The farmer did not appear until we had finished breakfast, and I waited at the kitchen-door for orders from him.

He came at last, kind and cordial as ever, but quite changed in purpose regarding my going to work. He urged my confessed inexperience, and the danger of exposure to the sun. I protested my willingness to assume the risks, and begged to be allowed at least to work for what had been given me. But he would not listen, and appeared to think that he set matters right by assuring me repeatedly that to what I had received I was "perfectly welcome." His wife gave me, at parting, some tracts, and a religious newspaper, and in these I found presented, in

somewhat lurid light, the evil consequences of insobriety.

Knowing that I was within walking distance of Garrisons-on-Hudson, I resolved to reach that point before night. My letters had been forwarded there, and my eagerness to get them was of a kind unexperienced before. It was Saturday, and, late in the afternoon, I reached Garrisons after a hard day's march. The heat was intense, and although I walked but a little more than twenty miles, the effort of carrying my pack was thoroughly exhausting. The woman in charge at the post-office was in evident doubt about the safety of giving me so large a packet of letters, but yielded at sight of others which I showed her, and readily agreed to look after my pack until I should call for it.

Between the station and the river was a tavern, and there I meant to apply for work. As I neared the station platform, a train from New York drew in. Something familiar in one of the passengers who alighted put me on my guard. In a moment I recognized a fellow-guest at a dinner-party of a few evenings before, and I remembered, with an odd sense of another existence, that, over our coffee, on a broad veranda, overlooking a harbor, bright with the night-lights of a squadron of yachts, he had given me the

benefit of an amazing familiarity with the details of the recent baccarat scandal. My anxiety was needless, for I easily passed unnoticed in the crowd.

I walked on to the tavern. Its keeper was busy behind the bar when I asked him for a job. He surprised me immensely with a ready promise of work, and he asked me to wait until he could arrange matters. I went into an adjoining room, and took out my letters.

It was the pool-room, and the walls were hung with colored prints of prize-fighters, with arms folded on their bare chests in a way that put their biceps much in evidence. And there were pictures of race-horses which had won distinction. An old, much-battered pool-table occupied the middle of the room. Around the walls ran a rough wooden bench. Dirt was everywhere conspicuous. The ceiling and walls were filthy. The floor was bare and unswept, and there were accumulations of dust about the table-legs and in the corners under the benches, which could be accounted for only by a liberal allowance of time. The two small windows, through which one could see the dismal tavern yard, apparently had never been washed.

I sat on a bench, and opened the letters. The dim past of my "respectable" life began to

I EASILY PASSED UNNOTICED IN THE CROWD.

brighten with increasing vividness. Quite lost to present surroundings, I was suddenly recalled to them by the appearance of the boss, who came with a cloth in hand, with which he aimlessly dusted the table while he questioned me. I was so absorbed in letters that, for a moment, I could not place myself, nor in the least account for the situation. The keeper was asking me what I could do. This was a natural question under the circumstances; but it took me by surprise, and it staggered me. I covered my confusion with a profession of willingness to be useful, and of a desire to work. The boss, a coarse, blear-eyed, sensuous-looking man, eyed me doubtfully, and suddenly concluded that he had no work for me.

But I was wide awake now. I knew that the nearest farms were some miles back in the country, and that, except at the tavern, I had slender chance of food or shelter. I said that if there was work to be done, I was eager to do it, and that if, after a trial, he found me incapable, he could dismiss me at any moment.

I fancied that I had gained my point, for he told me to follow him, as he led the way into the kitchen. There we found the cook bending over a range, in which the fire refused to burn.

"Mrs. Murphy," said the boss, "here's a man I've hired to help Sam," and then he turned sharply upon me with a "Damn you now, work! if you know how to work!"

My opportunity lay in the smouldering fire, so I hastened to the wood-pile, and presently returned with an armful of fine wood which insured a fire for dinner.

Mrs. Murphy was a little, old, emaciated Irish woman, with her thin white hair parted in the middle, smoothed back, and twisted into a careless knot on her crown. Her face was wrinkled almost to grotesqueness, and she had the passive air of one to whom can come no surprises of joy or sorrow, as though the capacity for sensation were gone, and life had reduced itself to mere existence. I watched for opportunities of helping her, and she accepted the services as though she had been accustomed to them always.

She began to interest me deeply. I learned from her that Sam, whom I was hired to help, was a scullion and stable boy. When she had nothing further for me to do in the kitchen, I returned to the wood-pile, and chopped industriously, hoping to give evidence of my fitness for the place. In an hour or more the proprietor called me, intending, I supposed, to give me a change of work; but, instead, he gave me

a quarter, and told me, not unkindly, but firmly, that he did not want me.

The situation was discouraging. I had tramped some twenty miles through dust and heat over a hilly country, and since the early morning I had had nothing but a few apples to eat. Besides, it was fast growing dark, and so too late to look for work on the farms back in the country.

The immediate neighborhood is largely taken up with country-seats, and I made repeated efforts to get work at the hands of a gardener. I soon discovered that I was in a community where special provision is made against my class. At the carriage gates I not infrequently found a notice which warned me of the presence of dogs, and although the dogs gave me no trouble, a lodge-keeper, or footman, or gardener, upon learning my errand, was invariably seized with fervent anxiety for getting me unnoticed out of the grounds.

At nightfall I walked back to the tavern, and asked the proprietor if I might sleep in his stables. To my surprise, he was exceedingly friendly. He readily agreed to that, and, of his own accord, he invited me to remain at the tavern over Sunday, and to take my meals in the kitchen; and he added that, on Monday morn-

ing, he would give me some work to do as compensation.

Already I had made a friend of the cook, and she now received me warmly. Perhaps it was her habitual good-nature, for she had the same kindly manner toward the other men, Sam and the three Irish section hands from the railway, who took their meals with her. More than ever I was attracted to her. She cordially greeted the workmen as they entered her hot, reeking, ill-lit kitchen, addressing them by affectionate diminutives of their first names, as Johnnie and Jimmie and the like. They clearly had a warm regard for her, and they respectfully lowered their voices and said "ma'am" in addressing her. To be sure they swore viciously in her presence; but then she swore, too, not ill-naturedly, but simply as an habitual means of emphasizing her usual language.

I watched her for some sign of ill-temper. In stifling quarters and under exasperating inconveniences she toiled on at work far beyond her strength, not patiently merely, but with the cheerfulness which is always thoughtful of the comfort of others.

In spite of fatigue, that night in the stable was not a restful one. The air lay heavy and hot in the unventilated loft, and through the night the

horses, tortured by flies, stamped ceaselessly in their stalls. About midnight two men came into the barn. I soon knew them for bedless wanderers like myself, and I awaited them in the hay with an interest that was lively. They did not climb to the loft, but lay down in a wagon; and for an hour or more I heard their gruff voices in antiphonal sentences replete with strange oaths. They were speaking in low tones and not excitedly, but their speech seemed little else than profanity.

The heat and darkness intensified the quiet of the night. The breathless stillness was broken only by the hoarse blasphemies below, and the nervous stamping of the pestered brutes. I tried to shut out the sounds, and at last fell asleep.

In the early morning I awoke to a beautiful mid-summer Sunday, the first of my vagrant life. Sam was whistling at his work in the stables and the tramps were gone. I found a path behind the barn leading to a point on the river-bank where I could bathe.

The military cadets were out on Sunday parade, and the music of their band was the summer morning itself, vocal in notes other than the songs of birds, and the soft murmur of the river. The tents of the camp shone spotlessly white on

the bluffs above the water. Some of the buildings were visible among the trees. The sheer approach to the Post and its dark background of well-wooded highlands threw into strong relief its commanding position. Among the hills to the north the river appears. The immediate section of it might be a lake, girt with steep hills, that are dense with infinite shades of green. About the Post the river sweeps in a magnificent curve, and disappears among the hills to the south.

The few books that my pack contained made generous amends, on this day of rest, for the weight which they had added to my load. After breakfast I took one of them to a shaded corner of the church-yard, and read there until the service hour, and then I slipped into a seat half hidden by the baptismal font.

In his sermon the rector contrasted the emasculated ideas of the present with reference to God's judgment of sin, with the virile thinking of the Middle Ages, expressed in such works of art as Dante's Inferno, and Angelo's Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel. Earnestly and eloquently he pleaded the reality of spiritual things to the minds of men in those ages of belief, and then he solemnly urged a return to the plain truths of inspiration, and to the teaching of the

Church, that "God cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance," and that the punishment of unrepented evil is "eternal death."

The church was well filled, and I looked it over with a quickened interest. The sexton and I, so far as I could see, were the only representatives of the poor. Outside were a number of coachmen and grooms and nurse-maids; but these, it is likely, were of another persuasion. Certainly they would have looked curiously out of place to our Protestant eyes among that well-dressed, prosperous company. I knew this body of worshippers at a glance; some of them I knew personally. It was easy to follow them all in imagination to country houses where the afternoon would be spent in what escape there offered from the heat. On the next day would be begun again the round of wholesome recreation and of social intercourse, relieved from the formality of town life, which makes up the summer rest, and which implies the leisure which is rendered possible only by the continuous work of a multitude of the poor, who constitute the parts of intricate social and domestic machinery. I seem to be dwelling upon a costly immunity from physical labor. It was not this that appealed to me. These worshippers had leisure, but they were far from being idle. My personal

acquaintance went far enough to recognize among them persons whose lives are full of strenuous activity in channels of splendid usefulness. It was the social cleavage which yawned to my vision from the new point of view. The rich were there in the house of God, but not the poor; and the very atmosphere of the place seemed to preclude the presence of the poor.

I had asked Sam to go to church with me. Sam had been watering the horses, and now had an empty bucket in each hand and some tobacco in his mouth. He stood still for a moment, regarding me intently, and shifting the tobacco from one cheek to the other. Then he asked me with much directness if I took him for a "dude." I said that I should then go alone. "That way?" asked Sam, with an eye to my gear. "It is the best that I can do," I explained. "Then go, and be fired for a bum," he replied, as he moved on toward the pump.

CHAPTER II

A DAY-LABORER AT WEST POINT

HIGHLAND FALLS, N. Y.,
Monday, August 3, 1891.

AT three o'clock on Saturday afternoon I decided to quit work on the old Academic building. I went up to the boss and told him of my intention, as I had seen other men do, and was ordered into the office; there, without a moment's delay, the timekeeper's books were consulted, and No. 6 was paid the five dollars and eighty-five cents which were due him. Five dollars are gone to Mrs. Flaherty for board; seventy-five cents more will be owing to her to-morrow morning for another day, and then I shall set out on the road with ten cents in my pocket.

I had calculated upon a balance far in excess of that; for when I went to work on Tuesday, five full working-days were before me, and, at a wage of one dollar and sixty cents, they were to yield an income of eight dollars. My reckoning left out the chance of rain. For three days passing showers drove us to cover, and the

"called time" was as closely noted by the boss as it is by the referee in a foot-ball game; only we were given no chance to make it up.

Mrs. Flaherty's home has a real hold upon my affections. It is one in my mind with the blessed interludes of rest which were brief transitions from one æon of work to another. My acquaintance with the household covers a period of incalculable time. Mrs. Flaherty wears toward me now a motherly air of possession; and she wrinkles her brows in perplexed protest when I tell her that I am going away in the morning, with no knowledge of where I shall find another place; and she wipes her mouth with the corner of her apron, and tells me, with increasing emphasis, that I'd better stay by my job, and let her care for me decently, and not go wandering about the country, and, as likely as not, come to harm.

Her husband is a painter, a little round man with red hair and high spirits, who is a well-preserved veteran of the Civil War, and very fond of telling you of his life as a "recruitie."

Minnie is their daughter. She inherits her father's hair, and gives promise of his rotundity. But just now Minnie is fifteen, and the world is a very interesting and exciting place. She took her first communion last Easter, and still wears

her confirmation dress on Sundays, and is really pretty in a blushing effort to look unconscious when Charlie McCarthy calls.

Charles appears regularly on Sunday afternoons, I gather. He is a driver for an ice-dealer, is not much older than Minnie, and is very proud of a light-gray suit and a pair of highly polished brown boots.

Tom is Minnie's only brother. He is a stoker on a river-boat, and can spend only his Sundays at home. Tom is a little past his majority, and takes himself very seriously as a man. He tells you frankly that he is earning "big money," and is anxious that you shall not escape the knowledge that he is a libertine.

The child that he is came comically to the surface last night, with no least regard for the newly found dignity of manhood. Tom shares one of the beds in my room, and in the middle of the night he came bounding to the floor in a nightmare, and running to the door began pounding it with both hands, and screaming, "Papa! Papa!" like a child in a paroxysm of fear. He soon woke himself, and then he slunk into bed and was surly with us as we crowded about him, eager to know the cause of this violent awaking.

Jerry and Pete and Jim and Tom Wilson and

I are the boarders. Wilson's is the only surname that I know. Surnames are little in use on this level of society; they smack of a certain formality like that which attaches to Sunday clothes. We were all sitting on the porch after supper on my first evening, and I knew that the men were taking my measure. Jerry broke the silence with an abrupt inquiry after my name. I responded with my surname. Jerry took his pipe from his mouth, and turned to me with some warmth: "That's not what I want to know. What's your first name? What's a man to call you?" "Oh, call me John," I said, with sudden inspiration, and I have passed as "John" accordingly.

Wilson and I worked together at unskilled labor, and we have a bed in common; and it was during a night of fearful heat, when neither of us could sleep, that Wilson, in a burst of confidence, told me his full name.

I had noticed him as a new-comer on the works on Wednesday morning. He accepted the job with alacrity, and, in spite of evident physical weakness, he went to work with feverish energy. At noon hour we shared a dinner, and he told me that he had slept in the open for three nights running, and had had nothing to eat since the previous noon. I referred him

to Mrs. Flaherty, and at supper I found him at a place at her table.

It was that night that he gave me his confidence. Two years ago he came to America from the north of Ireland. From the first he had found it hard to get work, and he had never kept a job long. This was chiefly due, he said, to his having been brought up to the work in the linen-mills, and to the difficulty that he found in adapting himself to any other. And now his narrative suddenly glowed with active personal interest, for, with each succeeding sentence about his apprenticeship in Lurgan, there rose into clearer memory visions of a charming fortnight once spent at the home of the owners of the mill.

I have set for myself to-day the task of describing the past week of actual service in the ranks of the industrial army. My pen runs wide of the subject, and I have to force it to the retrospect. There were five working-days of nine hours and a quarter each, less the "called time" eaten out by the rain. Never was there clearer proof of the pure relativity of time measured by an artificial standard. Hours had no meaning; there were simply ages of physical torture, and short intervals when the physical reaction was an ecstasy.

We were called at six on Tuesday morning; and at twenty minutes to seven we had breakfasted, and were ready to start for the works, each with his dinner folded in a piece of newspaper. Passing from our side street to the road which leads to the Post, we were at once merged in a throng of workingmen moving in our direction.

I was suddenly aware of a novel impression of individuality. Gangs of workingmen, as I recalled them, were uniform effects in earth-stained jeans and rugged countenances, rough with a varying growth of stubborn beard. To have distinguished among them would have seemed like distinguishing among a crowd of Chinese. Now individuality began to appear in its vital separateness, and to awaken the sense of infinite individual sensation, from which we instinctively shrink as we do from the thought of unbroken continuity of consciousness.

But my eyes were growing sensitive to other differences, certainly to the broad distinction between skilled and unskilled workmen. Many orders of labor were represented—masons and carpenters and bricklayers and plasterers, besides unskilled laborers. An evident superiority in intelligence, accompanied by a certain indefinable superiority in dress, was the general

mark of skilled labor. And then the class of unskilled workers was noticeably heterogeneous in composition, while many of the other class were plainly of American birth.

It is a mile from Highland Falls to West Point, and we moved briskly. There was little conversation among the men. Most of them had taken off their coats, and with these over their arms and their dinner-pails in hand, they walked in silence, with their eyes on the road. The morning was sultry and overhung with heavy clouds, full of the promise of rain. A forest lines much of the road, and from the overhanging boughs fell great drops of dew, dotting the surface of soft dust. The wayside weeds and bushes were gray with a coating of dust, and seemed to cry out in the still, hot air for the suspended rain.

The old Academic building stood near to the Mess Hall at the southern end of the Post. In process of removal one wing had been blown up by dynamite, I was told, and now its site lay deep in heaps of débris. It was here that one gang of laborers was employed, and it was with them that the boss had instantly given me a job upon my application on the previous morning.

There were about sixty men in the company. Most of them stood grouped among the ruins,

ready to begin work on the hour. I had but to follow their example. I hung my coat, with my dinner in one pocket, on a neighboring fence, and brought a shovel from the tool-house, and joined the other men. We stood silent, like a company at attention. The teamsters drove up with their carts, and the bosses counted them. In another moment the head boss, who had been keeping his eye on his watch, shut the case with a sharp metallic click, and shouted "Turn out!" in stentorian tones.

The effect was magical. The scene changed on the instant from one of quiet to one of noisy activity. Men were loosening the ruined mass with their picks, and urging their crow-bars between the blocks of stone, and shovelling the finer refuse into the carts, and loading the coarser fragments with their hands. The gang-boss, mounted upon a section of wall, began to direct the work before him. A cart had been driven among the ruins, and he called three of us to load it with the jagged masonry that lay heaped about it. It was too coarse to be handled with shovels, and we went at it with our hands. They were soon bleeding from contact with the sharp edges of rock; but the dust acted as a styptic and helped vastly in the hardening process. When the cart was loaded, an-

other took its place, and then a third and a fourth.

In a harsh, resonant voice the boss was shouting his orders over our heads, to the farthermost portion of the works. His short, thickset, muscular figure seemed rooted to the masonry on which he stood. The mingled shrewdness and brute strength of his hard face marked him as a product of natural selection for the place that he filled. His restless gray eyes were everywhere at once, and his whole personality was tense with a compelling physical energy. If the work slackened in any portion of the ruins, his voice took on a vibrant quality as he raised it to the shout of "Now, boys, at it there!" and then a lash of stinging oaths. You could feel a quickening of muscular force among the men, like the show of eager industry in a section of a school-room that has fallen suddenly under the master's questioning eye.

In the dust which rose from the débris I picked up a mass of heavy plaster, and, before detecting my mistake, I tossed it into the cart. But the boss had seen the action, and instantly noticed the error, and now all his attention was directed upon me. In short, incisive sentences, ringing with malediction, he cursed me for an

ignoramus and threatened me with discharge. I could feel the amused side-glances of the men, and could hear their muffled laughter.

At last all the carts were loaded and driven away, and until their return, some of us were set at assorting the débris—throwing the splintered laths and bricks and fragments of stone and plaster into separate heaps. The work compelled a stooping posture, and the pain of lacerated fingers was as nothing compared with the agony of muscles cramped and forced to unaccustomed use.

A business-like young fellow, with the air of a clerk, now began to move among the men, and they showed the keenest interest in his approach. I heard them speak of him as the "timekeeper," but I had no knowledge of such a functionary, and I wondered whether he had any business with me. He hailed me with a brisk "What is your number?" I looked at him in surprise. "He's a new hand," shouted the boss from his elevation. "What's your name?" asked the timekeeper, as he turned a page in his book. I told him, and when he had written it he drew from his pocket a brass disk, upon which was stamped the number six, and this he told me to wear, suspended by its string, and to show it to him as often as he made his rounds.

The cartmen had reappeared and received their loads, and had again driven off, in long procession, in the direction of Highland Falls. We went back to the varied torture of assorting. But the pain was not purely physical. The work was too mechanical to require close attention, and yet too exhausting to admit of mental effort. I did not know how to prevent my mind from preying upon itself.

At last I hit upon a plan which appealed to me. I simply went back in imagination to the familiar country-seat, and followed the morning through a likely course. We met at breakfast, and complained of the discomfort of the sultry day as we discussed our plans, and then we walked over the lawn to the pier. Two cruising sloops, that had waited in the hope of a freshening breeze, now weighed anchor, and under main-sail and top-sail and jib drifted slowly out of the harbor. We watched them in idle curiosity, wondering at the distinctness with which the conversation of the yachtsmen came back to us across the oily placidity of still water, until they seemed almost half way to the spindle, and then we agreed upon a morning ride. We telephoned to the stables, and before we were ready the horses stood restless under the *porte-cochère*. Step by

step I followed our progress along the road that skirts the inlet, and across the crumbling bridge on the turnpike, and under the great, drooping elms which line the village-street in Fairfield, and up the long ascent of the Greenfield Hill to the old church, and then home by the "back road." The dogs came running at us from the stables with short, sharp barks of welcome as we cantered past, and we called to them by name. As we turned by the reservoir, we could see a groom running down the path in order to reach the house before us. Hot from the ride, we passed through the dim mystery of the hall and billiard-room and den, and out upon the veranda, where a breath of air was stirring, and the fountain played softly in its bed of vines and flowers. Louis had returned from market. Our letters lay in order on the settle, and near them, neatly folded, were the morning papers. And now Louis's approach was heralded by the tinkling of ice against the glass of bumpers of cooling drinks, and his bow was accompanied with a polite reminder that luncheon would be served in half an hour.

I had been working with all my strength. Now I looked up at the boss in some hope of a sign of the noon hour. There was none. Painfully I went back to the work. Again I tried to

find diversion in this new device. Slowly, with double the needed time for each event, I followed the morning through another imaginary series. Now I was sure that the boss had made a mistake and had lost track of the time, and was working us far into the afternoon. The clouds had thickened, and the growing darkness I was certain was the coming night. Great drops of rain began to fall, but the men paid them no heed. Soon the drops quickened to a shower, and still the men worked on. The moisture from within and without had made us wringing wet when the boss ordered us to quit. We bolted for our coats and dinner-pails, and then huddled in the shelter of the still-standing walls of the ruin. Through one of the great doorways I caught sight of the tower of a neighboring building with a clock in it. It was twenty minutes to nine! In all that eternity since we began to load the first cart, we had been working one hour and forty minutes, and had each earned about twenty-nine cents.

The rain cost us an hour of working-time, and then we went back, and found some relief from the earlier discomfort in the saturation which had thoroughly settled the dust.

In another hour, with no freshening of the air, the clouds faded out of the sky. The sun

shone full upon us, and there arose from the heaps of ruin a mist heavy with the smell of damp plaster. But I had my "second wind" at last, and I worked now with the feeling of some reserve of physical strength. It was with surprise that I heard the loud voice of the head boss in a shout of "Time's up!" and almost before I knew what had happened the men were seated on the ground, in the shadows of the walls, eating their dinners.

I opened mine with much curiosity. There were two huge sandwiches, with slices of corned beef between the bread, and a bit of cheese and a piece of apple-pie, very damp and oozing. Among the other men, with my aching back pressed against the wall, I sat and ate my dinner, lingering over the last crumbs like a child with some rare dainty.

At the end of the forty-five minutes allowed to us at noon, there came again, from the head boss, the order to "Turn out." In a moment the scene of the morning was renewed. There was the same alternation between loading the carts and assorting the débris.

We had been but a few minutes at work when the cadets went marching past, on their way to mess. Familiar as most of the men were with the sight, they seized eagerly upon the diversion

that it offered. The boss relaxed his vigilance. The work visibly slackened, as we lent ourselves to the fascination of individual motion merged into perfect harmony of collective movement. Conspicuous in the rear was the awkward squad, very hot in its effort to walk erect, and keep its shoulders back and its little fingers on the seams of its trousers. The men laughed merrily at the comical contrast between such grotesquely strenuous efforts at conformity and the ease and strength and grace of the unison which preceded it.

No rain came to give us breathing-space in the afternoon. Hour by hour the relentless work went on. The sun had soon absorbed the last drop of the morning rain, and now the ruins lay burning hot under our feet. The air quivered in the heat reflected from the stone and plaster about us; the fine lime-dust choked our breathing as we shovelled the refuse into the carts. You could hear the muttered oaths of the men, as they swore softly in many tongues at the boss, and cursed him for a brute. But ceaselessly the work went on. We worked as though possessed by a curious numbness that kept us half-unconscious of the straining effort, which had become mechanical, until we were brought to by some spasm of strained muscles.

But five o'clock came at last, and with it, on the second, the loud "Time's up!" of the head boss. You could see men fairly check a tool in its downward stroke, in their eagerness not to exceed the time by an instant. In two minutes the tools were housed and the works deserted, and the men were running like school-boys, with a clatter of dinner-pails, in a competitive scramble for seats in the dump-carts, which were moving toward Highland Falls.

The hindmost were left to walk the mile to their lodgings. I fell in with two old Irishmen, who noticed me with a friendly look, and then went on with their conversation, paying me no further heed. But I felt strangely at home with these old men. Their short, faltering steps exactly suited my own, and I comfortably bent my back to the angle of their stoop, not in an effort to simulate their figures, but because to stand erect cost me exquisite agony.

The men in the carts were soon out of our sight, but the remnant was large and was thoroughly representative. We formed a weird procession, this fragment of a company in the ranks of labor. There were few native-born Americans, one or two perhaps, besides myself; but there were Irish and Scandinavians and Hungarians and Italians and negroes.

A WEIRD PROCESSION, THIS FRAGMENT OF A COMPANY IN THE RANKS OF LABOR

As a physical exertion, walking was not hard after our day's labor. It was a change and a rest, and we must all have felt the soothing refreshment in the breath of cool air which was moving down the river, and in the soft light of the early evening, which brought out in new loveliness the curves of the opposite hills and deepened the shades of blue and green. My own appreciation of all this and more would have been livelier but for two overpowering appetites, which were asserting themselves with unsuspected strength. I was hungry, not with the hunger which comes from a day's shooting, and which whets your appetite to the point of nice discriminations in an epicure's dinner, but with a ravenous hunger which fits you to fight like a beast for your food, and to eat it raw in brutal haste for gratification. But more than hungry, I was thirsty. Cold water had been in abundant supply at the works, and we drank as often and as freely as we chose. But water had long since ceased to satisfy. My mouth and throat were burning with the action of the lime-dust, and the physical craving for something to quench that strange thirst was an almost overmastering passion. I knew of no drink quite strong enough. I have never tasted gin, but I remembered in one of Froude's essays a reference to it as much in

use among working-men, and as being seasoned to their taste by a dash of vitriol, and eagerly I longed for that.

Half-way down the road we met some young women in smart dog-carts driving to the sunset parade at the post. In the delicate fabric and color of summer dress they seemed to us the embodiment of the cool of the evening. Suddenly I looked with a keener interest. With her fingers outstretched she was shading her eyes from the horizontal rays of the setting sun, and she did not see us, rather saw through us, as through something transparent, the familiar objects on the roadside. I had seen her last in town at a wedding at St. Thomas's, and fate unkindly sent her up the aisle on the arm of another usher. I laughed aloud, a short, harsh laugh, that escaped me before I was aware, and that had in it so odd a quality that it gave me an uncomfortable feeling of unacquaintance with myself. The two old Irishmen turned inquiring glances at me, and appeared disturbed at my serious look.

My room, when I reached it, was, in spite of wide-opened windows, like Nero's bath at Baiæ. The ceiling and walls glowed with stored-up heat. Jim was there making ready for supper, and I could hear Jerry and Pete in their room in similar preparation.

When I put my hands into the cold water, I could scarcely feel them; but the pain of cleansing grew sharp, and yet, when I had thoroughly washed them, although the fingers felt double their normal size, they were really less swollen, and were far on the way to comfort.

The reaction had set in now, and I could feel it in great, cooling waves of physical well-being. The table was heaped with supper, huge slices of juicy sirloin, and dishes of boiled potatoes and cabbage and beans, from which the steam rose in fragrant clouds. By each plate was a large cup of tea, so strong and hot that it bit like lye, and it soon washed away the burning lime-dust.

We sat down with our coats and waistcoats off. The men were in the best of good-humor, and the conversation ran into friendly talk. They asked me how I liked my job. I thought much better of it by this time, and I tried to wear the air of critical content. They may have had their own notions about my previous experience of manual labor, but certainly they did not obtrude these with any show of suspicion. They accepted me as a working-man on perfectly natural terms. Until Wilson came I was the only unskilled laborer among them, but my different grade was no barrier to our intercourse,

and we met and talked with the freedom of men whose experience is innocent of conventional restraints.

Long after supper we sat on the porch, smoking in the twilight. A deep physical comfortableness possessed us. Each mouthful of meat and drink had wrought miraculous healing, and had restored wasted energy in measures that could be felt. My muscles were sore, but the very pain turned to pleasure in the ease of relaxation.

The men were town artisans, skilled laborers, attracted here by the abundance of work. Jerry was a plasterer, and Pete a bricklayer, and Jim a stone-mason. A short, slender figure, a smooth-shaven face with small, sharp, regular features, black hair, and gray eyes, is a sufficient outline of Jerry's personality. His air was that of a cynic, and there was a cynical flavor in his speech, but the sting of it was gone at the sight of his soft gray eyes, full of generous reserve of human kindness.

Pete was a well-set-up young fellow, of twenty-five, perhaps, plainly of German parentage. Like Jerry, he was smooth-shaven, and there was a striking contrast between his dark hair and his singularly fair skin and blue eyes. He was a bricklayer, and ambitious of promotion.

He spoke hopefully of an appointment in the Navy Yard as a result of a recent examination.

Jim was the only married man among us. His wife and three children were in Brooklyn, and Jim went home every Saturday night, and spent Sunday with them. He was a handsome young Scotsman, with curling brown hair, and brown eyes, and a well-formed mustache, and a round face with full features. In the casual flow of our talk, Jim spoke of Burns, and quoted him with a ready familiarity. It was easy to catch the drift of his liking. Its set was steadily toward passages which sing the wrongs and oppression of the poor. Jim had none of the tricks of a declaimer; but with jerks of unstudied emphasis he repeated familiar lines until you were conscious of new meaning and strength. He was sitting with his chair tilted against the wall, and his heels resting on a round, and his hands clasped about his knees. His eyes were fixed upon the evening gloom as he recited:

> Man's inhumanity to man
> Makes countless thousands mourn.

The verses seemed exactly to fit his mood, for he repeated them again and again, with lingering liking for their sense and alliteration.

Jerry broke in abruptly here with sudden,

unmeasured condemnation of the dulness of evenings in a country town in the absence of the theatre, pronounced theátre. The drama had fired his imagination for the moment, for he broke through his wonted reserve and waxed fluent as he expressed his views:

"When I go to the theátre, I go to laugh. I want to see pretty girls and lots of them, and I want to see them dance. I want songs as I can understand the words of, and lots of jokes, and horse-play. You don't get me to the theátre to see no show got up by Shakespeare, nor any of them fellows as lived two thousand years ago. What did they know about us fellows as is living now? Pete, you mind that Tim Healy in the union, him that's full of wind in the meetings? Onct he give me a book to read, and he says it's a theátre piece wrote by Shakespeare, and the best there was. I read more'n an hour on that piece, and I'm damned if there was a joke into it, nor any sense neither."

We were presently yawning under the stars, and I was more than glad when the men spoke of bed. Almost in the next moment, to my consciousness, Mrs. Flaherty was knocking on the door, bidding us wake and not to go to sleep again, for it was six o'clock.

Of the five, this second day was the hardest.

My body was sore in every part when I began to work, and the help of hardening muscles I did not gain until the third day. Mrs. Flaherty had skilfully bound up the slight wounds on my fingers. The merciful rain came twice to our relief, once in the morning and again in the afternoon. But this was not an unmixed blessing, for in the minutes of delay we could but calculate the growing loss in wages, and watch the sure vanishing of any surplus above actual living expenses. I remember making an estimate on my way to my lodgings that evening, and it was with much sinking of heart that I discovered that my earnings made a total rather less than the cost of the day's living.

There has been difficulty in the way of intercourse with the men. I speak no Italian, nor any of the Scandinavian tongues, so that my acquaintance has been confined to my own countrymen, who are few in number in the gang, and to the Irishmen and negroes, and an occasional Hungarian who understands my stammering German. And within the English-speaking circle, in the absence of this, there have been other barriers. There is wanting that social freedom that is most natural in Mrs. Flaherty's home. There is much of it among the foreigners. They hang together at their work, and sit in

separate groups through the noon hour, and one commonly hears, especially among the Italians, that picturesque volubility which sets you wondering as to the subject of such fluent debate. Among the English-speaking men, the Irish and negroes are as Jews and Samaritans; but aside from this, the general attitude is one of sullen suspiciousness. Few appear to know the others, and not even their wretchedness draws them to the relief of companionship. Sometimes we hear warm greetings among acquaintances, or see some show of friendliness, but this is markedly out of keeping with the general tone of things. The usual intercourse is an exchange of experiences, an account of the circumstances which brought them to their present lot, among men who happen to be working side by side or sitting in company at the noon hour. Quite as commonly one hears only muttered curses against the boss.

You would gather from their own accounts that many of the men are unused to unskilled labor. There is a singular uniformity in their histories. Nearly all have seen better days, and are now but tiding over a dull season in their trades, or are earning enough to take them to some other part of the country, where there is a quickening in the demand for their labor.

I found myself growing doubtful of these unvarying tales. The mechanism became too apparent. "I am really an efficient and energetic workman," each seemed to say; "you see me now in a strait of circumstances. You should see me at my trade, in which I am an adept. I am out of that employment now because of depression in the business, but when business revives, or when I can reach Chicago or St. Louis or Minneapolis, my labor will be in strong demand." Irresistibly one is led to the belief that most of these men probably have no trade, or, at the best, are inefficient workmen, who, unable to keep a job long, habitually pick up a living at work like this, in the careless makeshift of a shiftless life.

It is refreshing to meet others who are frankly laborers. All their lives they have been bred to unskilled labor, and they make no pretence of anything different. They are hard men who look out upon a world that is hard to them at every point of contact; but they are true men, by virtue of their honesty and directness, and one likes them accordingly. Some of them are old, and it is pitiful to see them tottering under the burden of years, and staying off actual want by forcing their rheumatic limbs through the drudgery of this rude toil.

I had noticed the absence of one of this coterie for a day or two when, in the middle of a morning's work, he appeared among the ruins. He was an old Irishman. His face was swollen from toothache, and was bound up in a cotton bandanna. His hands were clasped on his stooping back, and he moved with the painful motion that suggests acute rheumatism. For a time he stood watching us at our work and exchanging words with some of the men about his complaints, when suddenly he burst into tears. The men jeered him, and angrily told him to be gone. I had a sickening feeling of cruelty as I saw him go sobbing down the road; but when I spoke of him at the noon hour the men explained that it was a disgrace to have him crying there, but that they would see that his wants were provided for.

There was a revelation in the discovery of the degree to which profanity is ingrained in the vernacular of these men, as representatives of the laboring poor. They swear with the readiness of instinct, not merely in anger, when their language mounts to a torrent of abuse unspeakably awful in its horrid blasphemies, but in commonest intercourse, when their oaths are as meaningless as casual interjections. And almost never is the rude hardness of their speech soft-

ened by the amenities which seem so natural a part of language. The imperative, more than any other mood, is rudely thrust into common use. They are even punctilious in its employment.

A single instance will serve to point the nature of this graceless speech. Two boys of ten or twelve are employed in carrying water to the men at their work. One carries his bucket through the building to those engaged in the upper stories; and the other, a flaxen-haired, delicate child whose thin legs bend under his burden, serves those of us who are at work on the heaps below. Through all the day, and especially in its greatest heat, the boys run busily from the works to a neighboring pump, and return with bucketfuls of water, which are at once surrounded by thirsty workmen and emptied in a few minutes. Regardless of the prevailing custom, I always thanked the little fellow for my drink. Soon I noticed that even this instinctive acknowledgment seemed to embarrass him. In an interval of rest he came up to me, after receiving my thanks. "You shouldn't thank me," he said. "And why not?" I begged to know. "Because, you see, I'm *paid* to do this," was his conscientious answer. A mere child, naturally gentle, and yet so bred to rougher

usage that a simple "Thank you" jarred upon his sense of right! A few minutes later I saw the two boys in a rough-and-ready fight, and their language lacked none of the horror of that of their elders.

I shall be on the road again to-morrow morning, and I shall go as penniless as I came, but somewhat richer in experience. I have been through nearly a week of labor, and have survived it, and have honestly earned my living as a working-man. In the future I shall have the added confidence which comes of knowing that, if work offers, I shall probably be able to perform it. But this is not the only cause of my increased light-heartedness. I am frankly glad to get away from the job on the old Academic building. This is a selfish feeling, and is not without the cowardice of all selfishness. I hope for a job of another kind, for a time at least, because I wish to see some hopefuller side of the lot of common labor. When we draw too near to the hand of Fate, and begin to feel as though there were a wrong in the nature of things, it is best, perhaps, to change our point of view—if we can. This may account for some of the drifting restlessness among working-men of my class.

The salient features of our condition are plain

enough. We are unskilled laborers. We are grown men, and are without a trade. In the labor market we stand ready to sell to the highest bidder our mere muscular strength for so many hours each day. We are thus in the lowest grade of labor. We are here, and not higher in the scale, by reason of a variety of causes. Some of us were thrown upon our own resources in childhood, and have earned our living ever since, and by the line of least resistance we have simply grown to be unskilled workmen. Opportunities came to some of us of learning useful trades, and we neglected them, and now we have no developed skill to aid us in earning a living, and we must take the work that offers.

Some of us were bred to farm labor, and almost from our earliest recollection we worked in the fields, until, tiring of country life, we determined to try some other; and we have turned to this work as being within our powers, and as affording us a change. Still others among us, like Wilson, really learned a trade; but the market offers no further demand for the peculiar skill we possess, and so we are forced back upon skilless labor. And selling our muscular strength in the open market for what it will bring, we sell it under peculiar conditions. It is all the capital that we have. We have no reserve means of

subsistence, and cannot, therefore, stand off for a "reserve price." We sell under the necessity of satisfying imminent hunger. Broadly speaking, we must sell our labor or starve; and as hunger is a matter of a few hours, and we have no other way of meeting this need, we must sell at once for what the market offers for our labor. And for some of us there is other pressure, unspeakable, immeasurable pressure, in the needs of wife and children.

The contractor buys our labor as he buys other commodities, like brick and iron and stone, which enter into the construction of the new building. But he buys of us under certain restrictions to us both. The law of supply and demand does not apply to our labor with the same freedom as to other merchandize. We are human beings, and some of us have social ties, which bricks and iron have not, and we do not, therefore, move to favorable markets with the same ease and certainty as these. Besides, we are ignorant men, and behind what we have to sell is no trained intelligence, nor a knowledge of prices and of the best means of reaching the best markets. And then we are poor men, who must sell when we find a purchaser, for no "reserve price" is possible to us.

The law of supply and demand meets with

these restrictions and others. If it applied with perfect freedom to our commodity, we should infallibly be where is the greatest demand for our labor; and with perfect acquaintance with the markets we should always sell in the dearest. But the benefits of perfect freedom of supply and demand would not be ours alone. If we sold in the dearest markets, the employer would as certainly buy in the cheapest. He has capital in the form of the means of subsistence, and can stand off for a "reserve price," and could force us to sell at last in the pinch of hunger, and in competition with starving men.

As matters are, our wages might rise, in an increased demand for labor, far above their present point; but even under pressure of decreasing demand, and with scores of needy men eager to take our places, our wages, if we had employment at all, would not fall far below their present level. So much has civilization done for us. It does not insure to us a chance to earn a living, but it does measurably insure to us that what we earn by day's labor, such as this, will at least be a living.

As unskilled laborers we are unorganized men. We are members of no union. We must deal individually with our employer, under all

the disadvantages which encumber our position in the market as compared with his.

But his position is not an enviable one. He is a competitor in a freer market than ours. He has secured his contract as the lowest bidder, under a keener competition than we know, and in every dime that he must add to wages in order to attract labor, and in every dollar paid to an inefficient workman, and in every unforeseen difficulty or delay in the work, he sees a scaling from the margin of profit, which is already, perhaps, the narrowest that will attract capital into the field of production. The results of our labor are worth nothing to him as finished product until given sections of the work are completed. In the meantime he must advance to us our wages out of capital which is a product of past labor, his own and ours as working-men, and of other capital. And this he must continue to do, even if his margin of profit should wholly disappear, and even if ultimate loss should be the net result of the expenditure of his labor and capital. In every case, before any other commodity has been paid for, we have insured to us the price for which we have sold our labor.

Our employer is buying labor in a dear market. One dollar and sixty cents for a day of nine hours and a quarter is a high rate for unskilled

workmen. And the demand continues, for I notice that the boss accepts every man who applies for a job. The contractor is paying high for labor, and he will certainly get from us as much work as he can at the price. The gang-boss is secured for this purpose, and thoroughly does he know his business. He has sole command of us. He never saw us before, and he will discharge us all when the débris is cleared away and the site made ready for the constructive labors of the skilled workmen. In the meantime he must get from us, if he can, the utmost of physical labor which we, individually and collectively, are capable of. If he should drive some of us to exhaustion, and we should not be able to continue at work, he would not be the loser, for the market would soon supply him with others to take our places.

We are ignorant men, and we have a slender hold of economic principles, but so much we clearly see: that we have sold our labor where we could sell it dearest, and our employer has bought it where he could buy it cheapest. He has paid high for it, but not from philanthropic motives, and he will get at the price, he must get, all the labor that he can; and, by a strong instinct which possesses us, we shall part with as little as we can. And there you have, in its

rudimentary form, the bear and the bull sides of the market.

You tell us that our interests are identical with those of our employer. That may be true on some ground unknown to us, but we live from hand to mouth, and we think from day to day, and we have no power to "reach a hand through time, to catch the far-off interest of tears." From work like ours there seems to us to have been eliminated every element which constitutes the nobility of labor. We feel no personal pride in its progress, and no community of interest with our employer. He plainly shares this lack of unity of interest; for he takes for granted that we are dishonest men, and that we will cheat him if we can; and so he watches us through every moment, and forces us to realize that not for an hour would he intrust his interests to our hands. There is for us in our work none of the joy of responsibility, none of the sense of achievement, only the dull monotony of grinding toil, with the longing for the signal to quit work, and for our wages at the end of the week.

We expect the ready retort that we get what we deserve, that no field of labor was closed to us, and that we are where we are because we are fit, or have fitted ourselves, for nothing better.

Unskilled labor must be done, and, in the natural play of productive activity, it must inevitably be done by those who are excluded from the higher forms of labor by incapacity, or inefficiency, or misfortune, or lack of ambition. And being what we are, the dregs of the labor market, and having no certainty of permanent employment, and no organization among ourselves, by means of which we can deal with our employer and he with us by some other than an individual hold upon each other, we must expect to work under the watchful eye of a gang-boss, and not only be directed in our labor, but be driven, like the wage-slaves that we are, through our tasks.

All this is to tell us, in effect, that our lives are the hard, barren, hopeless lives that they are because of our own fault, and that our degradation as men is the measure of our bondage as workmen.

This seems to state an ultimate fact, and then, with the habit of much of such thinking, to settle itself peacefully, with an easy conscience, behind the inevitable.

But for us there is no such peace or comfort in the inevitable. And yet, even in this statement of our case, we are not without hope. We are men, and are capable of becoming better

men. We may be capable of no other than unskilled labor, but why should we be doomed to perform it under the conditions which now degrade us at our work?

Imagine each of us an ideal workman. Through all the hours of the working-day we labor conscientiously, with no need of oversight beyond intelligent direction; for each of us feels the keenest interest in the progress of the work, because we are honest men, and, with far-sighted knowledge, we know that by our best labor in any form of useful production we are contributing our best to the general prosperity, as well as our own, and that it is by our energy and personal efficiency that we may open for ourselves a way to promotion. Here clearly is a solution on ideal grounds. Is there no remedy that can reach us as we are?

Our ambition must be fired, our sense of responsibility awakened and enlisted in our labor, our intelligences quickened to the vision of our own interests in the best performance of our duty. Life will not be rendered frictionless thereby. Work will still be hard, but to it will be restored its dignity, its power to call into play the better part of a man, and so build up his character.

We have already seen how such an end is

realized in the initial betterment of character itself. Let us see whether something might not be done by an initial improvement in the conditions of employment.

Let us suppose now that we are not ideal characters, but ordinary men, whose lot in life is to perform unskilled labor; but let us suppose that we are an organized body of workmen. The contractor made terms with us as an organized gang for the removal of the old building. Our organization, from long experience of such work, was able to enter into an eminently fair agreement. The contract rests upon a basis of time. For the completed work we are to receive a fixed sum, provided that it is finished by a given date. If we finish the work, according to the terms of the contract, one week earlier, we are to receive a bonus in addition to the fixed amount; if two weeks earlier, there will be an increase in the bonus. In the meantime advances are to be made to us, week by week, in the form of days' wages, but so regulated as to protect the contractor against loss if the gang should fail to complete the work.

Every member of the gang is perfectly familiar with the terms of the contract, and knows thoroughly the advantages of an early completion of the job. We agree among ourselves upon the

number of hours which shall constitute a day's work, and from our own number we elect a boss, who will give direction to our labor, and under whose orders we bind ourselves to serve. It is no part of his duty now to stand guard over us in the office of a slave-driver to prevent our shirking, for we effectually perform that service for ourselves, seeing to it, with utmost regard for our interests, that no man among us fails to do his share in the common task. The boss is now the best and most intelligent worker among us, and not only does he direct our efforts, but, with his own hands, he sets the example of energetic work for the securing of the best terms that the contract offers for our common good.

In a true sense now we have got a job. It is ours. The work is hard, but we have an object in working hard. Every stroke of labor is not a listless, time-serving economy of effort, but an eager and willing furthering of the work toward its completion and our own advantage. We are glad in the progress of our job, even if we are glad from no higher motive than our personal profit. We have a sense of responsibility and the keen interest which comes of that, even if they rise in no better source than our greed for gain.

It is true that the root of the matter lies deeper

than this. We may work under hopefuller conditions and be, intrinsically, no better men. Our selfishness may take on the refinement of the altruism that merely seeks our own in the welfare of others; our ignorance may become illumined by an enlightened self-interest; our vices may assume respectability; and yet our old hardness of heart remain in full possession of us. But the truly pertinent question is this: Nearer to which of these ways of living lies the living way? In which have we the better chance to become better men? Life in its present course is to most of us a miserable bondage. We work daily to physical exhaustion; and, with no power left for mental effort, our minds yield themselves to the play of any chance diversion until they lose the power of serious attention. In what constitutes for us the work of life there is no pleasure, no education, no evoking of our better natures.

All truly productive labor performed under right conditions is itself a blessing. It partakes of the highest good that life offers. It is a bringing of order out of chaos, a victory over forces which can be reduced from evil mastery to useful service. It thus becomes the type of that labor which is the work of life, the mastery of self in the building of character. In this

sense it was that the monks of the Middle Ages framed their motto, *Laborare est Orare*—labor is prayer. But robbed of its true conditions and reduced to the dishonor of time-service under the eye of a slave-driving boss, who impels us with insults infinitely more degrading than the lash, labor is no longer prayer, but a blasphemy, which finds expression in the words which rise readiest to our lips.

I have been writing from the position of an unskilled workman, with no apparent allowance for my newness to the life. The physical stress and strain, for example, how different my experience of these as compared with that of the other men inured to them by long habit! A year or two of such labor, and how great the physical change! My hands would be hard, and the friction of this work, so far from wounding them, would render them the more impervious to harm. My muscles would be like iron, and would lend themselves with far greater ease to the stress of manual labor. Ten years would find me a seasoned workman.

But under conditions of labor such as these, what changes other than physical would there be? My body might be hardened in fibre to the point of high efficiency in manual labor, but the hardening of mind and character—is it likely

that this would be of the nature of the strength of more abundant life, or of the hardness of petrifaction?

I have received the strangest kindness from the men, the most tactful treatment of me as a novice. They laughed at my strenuous efforts to do what was so much easier to them, and they laughed when the boss singled me out for abuse, but never ill-naturedly, I thought. And those who made up to me, and with whom I picked up acquaintance, showed the kindest consideration. They never pressed me with embarrassing questions, but fell gracefully into the easy assumption that I was a factory hand or a "tradesman" out of a job. It was natural to adopt the general strain and speak of plans which involved my going West.

In spite of their roughness and hardness of manner and speech, one never felt the smallest fear of these men, and you had a growing feeling that their better natures were never far to seek. And yet in reality here they were, a cursing, blaspheming crew; men upon whose lives hopelessness seems to have settled; whose idea of work is a slavish drudgery done from the instinct of self-preservation and to be shirked whenever possible; whose idea of pleasure is abandonment to their unmastered passions.

I had a purpose in quitting work in the middle of Saturday afternoon. I went to my lodgings and asked Mrs. Flaherty for an early supper of anything that she could give me without trouble. Then I brushed my clothes and washed myself, and made myself as presentable as my slender pack permitted. My beard was now of nearly two weeks' growth, and my face was well burned by the sun, and my clothes, in spite of the protection of overalls, were much labor-stained.

I felt some security in my disguise, and after an early supper I walked over to see the sunset parade. On the road I met the men returning from the works, and had to run a gauntlet of questions as to whether I had left the job for good, and what I meant to do.

There was bustle in the camp; a running to and fro of cadets, who appeared to be subject to many calls; a nervous appearing and vanishing at the tent-doors of figures which were in process of achieving parade-dress; a hasty personal inspection of arms and uniform; and then suddenly, out of apparently inextricable confusion, there emerged, without a trace of disorder, the two companies, in double lines of perfect symmetry, before the inspecting officer.

Then followed the sunset parade. Seated on the benches under the trees, and grouped on the

turf behind, was an eager crowd watching intently, in perfect stillness, every evolution of the cadets. The fascination was in the sense it gave you of abounding life, of youth and strength and vigor, brought to perfect unity in willing subordination to authority. Here was the type of highest organization, the voluntary submission of those who are "fit to follow to those who are fittest to lead." So much has civilization achieved for the purpose of self-defence. The mission of many of these young officers will be to take such men as those with whom I have been working, and teach them the manly lesson of obedience, and awaken in them the feelings of courage and loyalty and *esprit de corps*. Civilization is yet a long way from such organization for industrial ends, if ever such corporate action will be possible or good; but certainly it will not be long before civilization gives birth in increasing numbers to "captains of industry," who will feel with their men other ties than the "*nexus* of cash payment," and who will attack the problems of production with other aims than selfish accumulation. Under the direction of such leaders, workingmen will be led to far greater conquests over the resources of nature than any in the past, and, sharing consciously in these victories as the fruits of their own labors, there will open to

them a new life of liberty and hope in willing allegiance to true control.

The intense satisfaction I felt in the rest of yesterday (Sunday) was heightened by a feeling of hopefulness as I thought of the future of workingmen in a country like ours. Here are almost boundless natural resources, capable of supporting many times our present population. Under the stimulus of private acclamation, what marvellous genius and skill and enterprise have directed labor to the development of our national wealth! When, with the growth of better knowledge, there is added to this stimulus among the great leaders of industry a sincere desire for the common good and a purpose to make the conditions of employment the means of achieving this good, how far greater must be the industrial results, and how far better the lives of the workers!

I felt aglow with this idea as I walked, in the afternoon, down the road below Highland Falls. It was a warm mid-summer day, and in keeping with its restful quiet the air moved gently among the leaves in the tree-tops. I was disturbed by the sound of music from the deck of an excursion steamer, and, seized with sudden desire for a glimpse of the river, I vaulted a low stone wall, and quickly made my way over the mossy

carpeting of a wood which covers the bluff above the water.

I did not see, at first, the abrupt ending of the wood and the sweep of an open lawn, and when I caught sight of that I was only a few yards from a rustic bench. There two persons sat, with their backs toward me, but I recognized the girl at once as an acquaintance, and I knew that I was a trespassing vagrant. The man I knew well, for he was a college classmate and a charming fellow, and I longed to ask his views on the question of the improvement of the lot of unskilled laborers by means of organization.

But I grew painfully conscious of my work-stained clothes, and my faded flannel shirt, and the holes in my old felt hat, and of how all these marked me as belonging now to another world. And so I quietly stole away and returned to "mine own people."

CHAPTER III

A HOTEL PORTER

THE HIGHLANDS, ORANGE COUNTY, N.Y.,
Tuesday, 25 August, 1891.

I AM now a hotel porter. More strictly, I have just resigned my position, and with the net proceeds of three weeks' wages, which amount to four dollars and two cents, I am ready to make a fresh start in the early morning. The leisure of this last evening at the hotel I shall give to the task of summing up the fragmentary notes which I have made in such chance hours of rest as were to be had in a service which has kept me on duty from five o'clock in the morning until eleven at night.

Why I have lingered here so long I scarcely know. The time has flown with amazing swiftness. I soon found my new job easily within my powers, as compared with the last one, and I have felt a certain restful security which has held me here for longer than I meant to stay. But I am ready enough to set out now, and I feel again a "yearning for the large excitement" that

comes of life upon the open highway, and the chances of a living earned by the work of my hands.

I am not twenty miles beyond my last station at Highland Falls. It was raining when I left Mrs. Flaherty's home, and she pleaded with me to stay; but I had nothing with which to pay for further entertainment, and I certainly had not the courage to return to the job on the old Academic building. And so we parted, Mrs. Flaherty standing with arms akimbo in the open door of her cottage, a final protest against so rash a venture as her last word, while I lifted my hat to her and to Minnie, who peered at me from the shadow of the passage behind her mother.

It must be owned that the prospect was not encouraging to my new departure. At intervals of less than a mile, sometimes, I was driven to seek refuge from the rain. The mountain-road was soft with mud, and a secure footing was a fruitless search. In the hot air the heavy dampness added to the discomfort of walking. Only in a general way I knew that the road would lead me eventually over the Highlands to Middletown, which lies in my westward course. The beauty of the country was lost upon me, for the mountain was cloaked in a heavy fog, and all

that rose visible were short, succeeding sections of muddy road, bordered with forests of oak and hickory-nut and chestnut, with matted weeds growing thick to the wagon-tracks, and clumps of blackberry bushes standing here and there along the lines of tottering stone walls and wooden fences.

In the middle of the noon hour I reached Forest-of-Dean Mines. A general supply store stands on the roadside. It was thronged with Italian laborers. I waited in its shelter until the one-o'clock whistle recalled the men to their work, and then I made terms with an Italian boy, who was left in charge, for a five-cent dinner. The child spoke English with perfect readiness. Almost concealed behind the counter, he looked wonderfully important and business-like as he reached up to apply the weights and fixed his great black eyes shrewdly upon the oscillations of the balance. For five cents he agreed to give me two ounces of cheese and six soda-crackers.

This proved a hopelessly inadequate dinner, and by the middle of the afternoon I was painfully hungry. It must have been between the hours of three and four when, on a stretch of level road, I met a tall, over-grown negro youth with a bucket of sour milk in each hand, which was plainly destined for a pig-pen that I had

passed but a few yards back. Looming dimly in the fog behind him, I could see the outlines of a large frame structure with lightly built verandas engirding it. I asked the youth what it was, and learned that it was a hotel, the "—— House."

'Did he think that I could get a job there?' He was doubtful of that, but advised my seeing the "boss," whom I should find in the office. The office was deserted when I entered it. Some men were playing billiards in the larger room beyond, which, with the office, forms the ground floor of a building detached from the main hotel, but joined by a veranda on the upper story.

I sat down, and began to dry my feet at a slow fire which burned in an iron stove. Presently there came in a tall man, straight of figure, with black eyes and hair and mustache and an uncommonly dark complexion. I rose with an inquiry for the proprietor, and he sat down with the assurance that he was the man. There were two definite requests in my mind. I meant to apply first for a job; but, expecting nothing of a permanent character, I resolved to ask work for the remaining afternoon for the sake of food and a night's shelter from the rain. To my surprise, instead of the negative I expected to my

first request, I found some encouragement in the proprietor's manner. He owned to the need of a porter until the arrival, in a few days, of the man who had been engaged for that position. I declared my willingness to serve and to begin work on the moment. He pointed out that he did not know me, and that he was not in the habit of engaging servants whom he did not know. 'Besides, there was not much for the porter to do, and for his services he was paid at the rate of eight dollars a month and his board.' I was ready with a plea for a trial, if only for a single day, and presently the proprietor consented.

He rose, and at once began to instruct me in my duty. Standing on the threshold between the office and billiard-room, he pointed to the bare floors, and explained that they must be scrubbed every morning. He then indicated the score or more of oil-lamps with which the rooms were lighted, and said that these must be kept clean and filled. Next he opened a door from the office into a small room in which was a cot. That was to be my sleeping-place, and he showed me, in one corner, buckets and a mop and a broom, which were intended for the porter's use. Quite abruptly he asked to see my hat, and, wondering at the request, I showed him

the stained black felt with ragged holes in the crown. "That won't do," he said, and with the word he took down from a peg a porter's cloth cap with a patent-leather visor, and bade me wear it at my work. It was much too small, but by dint of holding my head with care I could keep it on; thus balancing the cap as best I could, and with the broom in hand, I followed my employer for further instructions. He led the way to the verandas, and explained that they must be swept each morning before the guests are up, and again in the afternoon, at the hour when they are least in use. They were nearly deserted now, and the proprietor told me to begin my work by sweeping them, and then he left me.

I could have danced with sheer delight. Not if I had deliberately planned it could I have effected a better arrangement. It fitted my needs exactly. A change to lighter work for a time was almost a necessity; for my hands were much blistered and torn, and they refused to heal under the friction of my last employment. And then—and my spirits rose buoyantly to this idea—here was a chance to see something of domestic service, and such another, under conditions so favorable, might not offer in all my journey across the continent.

"This morning," I thought to myself, "I was a roving laborer in search of work and with but ten cents in my pocket; now I am a hotel porter, with bed and board assured and an open field for observation, and some certainty of a surplus, regardless of the weather, when I quit the job, although, at its present rate, my daily wage is a fraction less than twenty-seven cents."

As I swept the verandas my plans began to form themselves with exciting interest. "Here is clearly a splendid opportunity. I have been frankly told that a porter is already engaged, and is on his way, and that my occupancy of office is simply for the interregnum. Plainly, if I can give evidence, in the meantime, of usefulness such that, when the regular porter comes, I shall be continued in some employment about the hotel, that will be a distinct achievement; and it will not be without a bearing upon the practical question as to what a penniless man may do for himself in the way of winning permanent employment that offers chances of promotion." I resolved to bend all my energies to that.

When the verandas were swept, I returned to the office and billiard-room, and began to study the field. The floors were sadly in need of scrubbing; many of the lamp chimneys were

smoked, and all were far from clean; the windows of both rooms were much weather-stained; and the paint on the woodwork could be improved by a thorough washing. I then went over the grounds, and found the walks in disorder, and the lawns matted and strewn with litter.

I lit the lamps at nightfall, and awaited a summons to supper. While in the region of the kitchen I noticed that an extra hand might often prove of service there. Back in my own domain for the evening, I found my offices in demand in attendance upon the billiard and pool tables.

By eleven o'clock the house was still, and I was at liberty to go to bed. Among the furniture in the office was an alarm-clock. This I wound up, and set for a quarter to five.

The morning was splendidly bright. When I stepped out upon the veranda the sun had already cleared the tops of the wooded Highlands, and, with the radiance reflected from infinite rain-drops in the forests, there rolled from their "gorgeous gloom" the "sweet after showers, ambrosial air." In no direction was the outlook wide; but the air gleamed in the sunlight with the crystal clearness which gives its peculiar quality to our autumn, and which so early as

August can be had only at considerable altitudes.

But the scrubbing awaited me, and was a task of much uncertainty. In the kitchen I filled my buckets with water—cold water, I am sorry to say. I threw wide open the doors and windows, and first sprinkled the floors, as I had seen shopkeepers do, and then swept them thoroughly. I tried to apply the water by means of a mop with a long wooden handle; but failing completely in that, I detached the handle, and getting down on my knees, I went carefully over the surface with the mop in hand. Frequently I changed the water, and when the scrubbing was done I looked the damp floors over with immense satisfaction.

Until I was called to breakfast I spent the time in sweeping the verandas and clearing from the walks the twigs and dead leaves with which they were strewn after the rain. In no way was I prepared for the alarming surprise which was in store for me. When I returned to the office I stood aghast at the sight of the newly scrubbed floors. They were dry now, and were covered with fantastic designs. Every final movement of the mop was distinctly traceable in streaks of unmistakable dirt. And there was the proprietor at work at his desk, and he faintly

noticed me as I entered. I stood expecting my discharge, with what fortitude I could summon, but receiving no further attention from my employer, I hurried back to the work on the walks and drives. During the dinner-hour I brought a broom to bear upon the coiling traceries on the floor, and succeeded in softening their bolder outlines.

But scrubbing proved a peculiarly difficult art. On the second morning I did all that I had done before, and then got buckets of clean hot water and a fresh mop; and on hands and knees I went over the floors, wiping them up with scrupulous care. The result was no better, once dry, and the designs in daubs of dirt were as fantastic as ever. On the third morning I tried still a new plan, but only with the result of effecting a change in the designs. I was learning to scrub by an empirical process, and the fourth venture approached success. Hot water and soap, and a scrub-brush vigorously applied, and then a final swabbing, left the floors comparatively clean, and free from the persistent mop-stains.

Only one more of my duties I found difficult of mastery. Like scrubbing the floors, washing the windows was full of surprises. From one of the house-maids I learned that clean, hot,

soapy water was the prime necessity. I was delighted with the first result, for after the washing within and without, I had visions of the glass in a high state of clean transparency. But the sun had absorbed the water, and left stains of tenacious soap, when I came to the polishing, and after hours of labor I almost despaired of ever bringing the panes to a reasonably untarnished condition.

The work has varied so little in detail that the history of a single day is an epitome of the three weeks' service:

I am up at a little before five in the morning. The floors of the office and billiard-room are my first concern; and by the time these are scrubbed it is six o'clock. The *chef* early noticed my willingness to lend a hand in the kitchen, and he rewards me with a liberal supply of hot water every morning, and a cup of coffee and a slice of bread at six o'clock when he takes his own. Fortified in this way, I sweep the verandas and walks, and rake the drives and lawns until breakfast.

There is a curious, horizontal, social cleavage among the "help." I belong to the lower stratum. I first noticed the distinction at our meals. The negro head-waiter, and the pastry-cook, and the head-gardener, and the company

of Irish maids, who do double duty as waitresses and house-maids, take their meals in the dining-room after the guests are served. The remnants of these two servings are then heaped upon a table in a long, low, dimly lighted room which intervenes between the kitchen and dining-room, and there we of the lowest class help ourselves. Our coterie consists of an English maid, a recent arrival from Liverpool, who serves as a dishwasher, three negro laundresses, two negro stable-boys and myself, with a varying element in two or three hired men, who drop in irregularly from the region of the barns.

Martha, the English maid, is chiefly in charge here, and she bravely tries to serve, and to bring some order out of the chaos; but the task is beyond her. We take places as we find them vacant, and each helps himself from what remains to be eaten of the fragments of the meal just ended. There is always a towering supply, but an abundance of a sort that deadens your appetite, like the blow of a sand-bag.

I reproached myself with fastidiousness at first, and imagined that to the other servants, who shared it, the fare was entirely palatable; and so I was surprised when, at a dinner early in my stay, one of the negro laundresses seized

years. My liking for children amounts to reverent devotion, and it gave me a shock, from which I have not recovered, to find that, unshaven and uncouth in workmen's clothes, I had become for them a bogey with whom their nurses frighten them into obedience, warning them in excited tones with "Here comes the man to take you away!"

It was at this work, too, that I once incurred the avowed displeasure of a guest. She was a beautiful Philistine, with a keenly penetrating twang and turns of speech that bespoke the regions of Sixth Avenue and Fourteenth Street. But she was remarkably handsome, tall and graceful, and of high-bred bearing and of a thoroughly aristocratic type. It must be confessed that whenever she was visible from my regions the section of the grounds which commanded a view of her, and was yet fairly beyond the sound of her voice, received assiduous attention from me; for she was highly remunerative to look at. I was sweeping a section of the walk immediately in front of the hotel. Unlike the work at West Point, a porter's duties do not preclude mental effort. Absorbed in thought and quite unconscious of my surroundings, I was suddenly recalled to them and to my station in life by nasal accents raised in strong

reproof. I looked up in bewilderment, and saw confronting me the beautiful Philistine, holding a little child by each hand. Very straight she stood and bright-eyed, with her head thrown back, and an exquisite flush over her face, and her beautiful lips curled in anger, as she scolded me roundly for raising so much dust. I was unfamiliar with the etiquette of the situation, so I held my peace, and respectfully touched my cap, inwardly calling her the beauty that she was as she stood there, and ardently hoping that she would scold me more.

From the lawns I go to the kitchen, and offer my services to the *chef*. Usually he has ready for me a basket of potatoes to peel. In a little shed by the kitchen-door I sit and peel endlessly. The servants are flocking in and out through the open door in the fetid air. The heat is of the suffocating kind, in which the heavy air lies dead. It is nearing the dinner-hour, and everyone must work with almost a frenzy of effort. The high tension communicates itself to us all, and we feel the nervous strain upon our tempers. The hundred and one petty annoyances which cause the friction of household service prove too much, and the tension bursts into a furious quarrel between the Irish pastry-cook and the negro head-waiter. No one has time to

heed them, but his storming oaths and her plaintive, whining key, maintained with provoking tenacity, whatever relief they bring to them, are far from soothing to the rest of us.

The maids are gathered from all parts of the hotel. Most of them have been on duty since six o'clock, and after the morning's work there now awaits them the rush of serving dinner. Want of sufficient sleep and utter physical weariness have drawn deep lines in their faces. Presently one of them, a slender young girl, sinks exhausted into a seat, and we hear her notion of the *summum bonum:* "Oh, I wish I was rich, and could swing all day in a hammock!" I follow the direction of her eyes. Across a wide stretch of lawn and in the shade of some clustering maples I see the gleam of a white dress rocking gently in a hammock, and I catch the flutter of a fan and the light on an open page.

Sometimes I am in the region of the kitchen during the dinner-hour itself. As an experience, I fancy that it is not unlike that of being behind the scenes in the course of the play. The kitchen and pantry are ill-ventilated, and are hot to suffocation. About a counter-like partition which separates the two rooms crowd the eager waitresses, rehearsing in shrill tones their orders to the *chef* and his assistant. There

I HELD MY PEACE, AND RESPECTFULLY TOUCHED MY CAP, INWARDLY CALLING HER THE BEAUTY THAT SHE WAS.

is a babel of voices striving to be heard, and a ceaseless clatter of dishes, and a hurrying to and fro. The *chef* is not a bad fellow, but his temper is rarely proof against the harassing annoyances incident upon serving a dinner, and he loses it in a torrent of oaths. The volume of noise increases until the height of dinner is reached and passed, and then it subsides, quite like a thunder-storm.

The afternoon's work keeps me, for the most part, in my own regions. The lamps must first be cleaned and filled, and then the billiard-tables brushed for the evening play, and there may remain unfinished work on the grounds, which claims me until it is time to sweep the verandas again.

When I am out of the office I must be careful that the doors and the windows are open, and my ears attentive to the bell; for I am porter and bell-boy in one.

A bell-boy is sometimes at a disadvantage. He is not supposed to explain, and circumstances may wrong him.

The bell rings. I run to the indicator, and then climb to the door that bears the corresponding number. A lady asks for a pitcher of ice-water. Unluckily the ice-chest is locked, and the key, I learn, is in the keeping of the head-

waiter. After hasty search, I find that official seated on a rock in the shade behind the barn, conversing with some of the hands. He tells me that there is no ice in the chest, and advises my going to the ice-house. I do so with all possible speed, and am fortunate enough to find a piece of loose ice not far below the surface of saw-dust. Back to the kitchen I run with it, wash it, and chop it into fragments. But all this has taken time; it is very hot, and the lady, no doubt, is very thirsty. As I hand her the pitcher of water, her caustic acknowledgment expresses anything but gratitude.

The verandas are no sooner swept for the afternoon than the stage appears from the station. I must be in attendance to relieve the newly arrived guests of their lighter luggage and, with the help of one of the stable-boys, to carry their trunks to their rooms.

It was in such services as these that I met with an insuperable difficulty. Before I launched upon the enterprise of earning my living by manual labor I settled it with myself that I would shrink from no honest work, however menial, that might fall within the range of my experiment. I confess that, in my present avocation, when it came to the necessity of cleaning the cuspidors used by a tobacco-eating gentry, the

task was accomplished only after hard setting of teeth, and much involuntary contraction of muscles. But I hasten to let fall a veil already too widely drawn from the hidden rites of a porter's service. The difficulty in point was of another kind, and had to do with tips. I was not unprepared for the emergency, for the proprietor had hinted, in our first conversation, with every mark of embarrassment, and with a tone of apology for the eight dollars a month, that that amount was sure to be supplemented by gratuities. It might have been different under other circumstances; but when I had seen the guests and noted the unmistakable marks of residence in cheap flats and low-rent suburban cottages, and realized the careful husbanding of funds and the close calculation which make a summer outing possible to them, their fees were some degrees beyond the possible to me.

In the case of the luggage, it was easy to bow acknowledgment and to decline in favor of Sam, the stable-boy, who, beaming with delight, stood ready to receive gifts to any amount, and who loved me warmly. But when I was alone with some guest in the act of a personal service, the situation created by a proffered fee proved embarrassing to us both, and was not to be relieved by bows and expressions of sincere appreciation.

The evening's duties are usually the lighting of the lamps at nightfall, and assorting the mail that comes in after supper, and attending the billiard and pool tables, and answering the bell-calls. Saturday afternoons and evenings are varied with industrious preparations for extra guests. This makes added demands upon us all, and the servants dread Sunday as bringing always the severest strain of the week. My own share of extra work is confined to Saturday afternoon and evening, when I put up cots, and carry bed-linen and blankets about, under the orders of the house-keeper, usually until midnight. And when I go to sleep at last it is on the hay in the barn, for my room is swept and garnished on Saturday and given up to a guest. It is no hardship to sleep on the hay, but, through knowledge gained from the scale of prices posted in the office, I can but understand what an admirable business arrangement it is for the proprietor to so utilize my room over Sunday. The added revenue which is thus yielded during my stay amounts to fifteen dollars, and as the total sum of my wages for the three weeks is five dollars and sixty-seven cents, the net returns to the proprietor in service and profit speak well for his management.

But there is other evidence of good manage-

ment, and in a quarter that appeals to me more. His treatment of the "help" is so uniformly fair. I do not like him; but, so far as I know, I am alone in my dislike among all the servants of the house; and I cannot fail to see that a feeling of personal loyalty is behind much of the patient, enduring service to which I have been witness. Only once was there an approach to a collision between us, and certainly I emerged from that in rather a ridiculous light.

It was but two or three evenings ago. Usually I have been able to eat at our table enough at least to deaden appetite, but on that evening I could eat nothing. As I passed through the pastry-kitchen on my way back to the office I saw a few pieces of corn-bread which were apparently to be thrown away. I asked the cook for some, and she readily told me to help myself. On a flagging near the kitchen-door I sat down to eat the bread, and the proprietor must have seen me there in the dim light. I had not finished when the negro head-waiter came upon me in much excitement. I belong to a lower order of service than he, but he treats me civilly, and there was nothing more than nervousness in his manner now.

"You mustn't get cheese from the pantry without leave," he was saying in high agitation.

I thought that he had gone mad, but he presently made clear that the proprietor had come to him with the complaint that I was eating cheese, which is kept in the pantry, and is not intended for the lower servants. The supper-table had upset me, and the corn-bread which caused the present trouble had been cold comfort. I was furiously angry now, hot and aglow with a passion of rage which at that moment was a splendid sensation. With great civility I thanked the head-waiter, and explained the mistake, and showed him a fragment of bread still in my hand, and then asked where I should find the proprietor. He had gone to the office, and I followed him there, scarcely conscious of touching the ground. It was close upon the mail-hour, and the office was crowded with guests. Near the stove stood the proprietor, and he saw me as I approached him. I was looking him full in the eyes when I told him, without introductory remarks, that if he had any further criticisms to offer upon my conduct he was at liberty to bring them directly to me. If I had had any sense of humor left I should have laughed then at his appearance, and have forestalled the ridiculous scene, in which, with a look of distressed embarrassment, he edged toward the door, and I followed, with my eyes on

his, as I treated him to the most cynically patronizing sentences which I could frame, while the guests looked on in silence.

Once in the quiet of the veranda, he explained to me that, since he holds the head-waiter responsible in such matters, he had naturally complained to him, and added that he was sorry if any mistake had been made. I pointed out the mistake, and felt the fool that I was, and spent the evening in a long walk over the hills, returning only in time to lock up and put out the lights.

As a basis of comparison I have now the two short terms of service at West Point and here. I received employment at both places as almost any laborer might have done, and I found in them both the means of livelihood. But as a servant, I have found more than that. The man who had been engaged as porter appeared about a week after my arrival. He proved to be Martha's brother, and a newly landed immigrant. There was no mistaking the last fact. His peaked countenance, with surviving traces of ruddy color; his queer pot-hat, that rested on his ears; his bright woollen tippet, defying the heat; his baggy suit, which had doubtless served for day and night through all the voyage; his heavy boots—all proclaimed him the raw ma-

terial of a new citizen. Nor could there be a doubt of his kinship with Martha. She stood with me awaiting the stage, directing eager glances down the carriage-drive and excitedly asking questions about its coming. She was the first to see it, and to recognize her brother on the seat with Sam, and she fluttered about in the unconcealed delight of affection, perfectly unconscious of everyone, until her arms were about her brother's neck, and she was leading him away to the kitchen.

Nothing was said to me about leaving; Martha's brother became her assistant as a dish-washer, and learned to lend a generally useful hand in the kitchen.

And so I had fairly won my place, and had open before me a way of promotion. Experience alone could disclose the value of the opening; but the "—— House" is a winter as well as a summer resort, and a porter's services are therefore in demand through the year. If efficient, intelligent labor could not eventually win higher and more responsible position in such an enterprise, and possibly gain, at last, an interest in the business, the case is surely exceptional.

It is the change in external conditions and its bearing upon me as a human worker which have

most impressed me, in contrast with my first experience.

I worked for nine hours and a quarter at West Point, and had, at the end of the day's labor, if the weather had been good, eighty-five cents above actual living expenses. Here I have usually worked from five o'clock in the morning until eleven at night, at all manner of menial drudgery, and have gone to bed in the comfortable assurance that, in addition to food and shelter, I have earned twenty-six cents and a fraction. And yet, as a matter of choice, purely with reference to the conditions under which the work is done, I should infinitely prefer a week of my present duties to a single day at such labor as that at West Point.

The work here is specific, and it is mine, to be done as I best can. Responsibility and initiative and personal pride enter here, and render the eighteen hours of this work incomparably shorter than the nine hours of my last. It is true that it partakes of the character of much household service, in that it is ever doing and is never done; but there is a feeling of accomplishment in the fact of getting my quarters clean and the grounds in order, and in keeping them so, although it be at the cost of labor always repeated and never ended.

Perhaps it is because I am still haunted by the thought of the cruel bondage of unskilled labor, under which men exhaust their powers of body and mind and soul at work that, in the very conditions of its doing, seems to harden them into slaves, instead of strengthening them into men, that I fail to feel keenly the want of time that I can call my own. I have an independence of vastly better sort in having work which I can call my own, and which I can do with some human pleasure and interest and profit in its performance, however hard it may be.

Slender as is my acquaintance with either, I yet see, with perfect certainty, that the standard of character is higher in this company of servants than among the gang of unskilled laborers. Other causes may have a share in this result, but the efficient cause is clear in the better moral atmosphere in which the work is done. I do not know how conscious is the feeling of unity of interest with their employer, or of copartnery with one another in labor, or of personal responsibility; but all these motives must play a part in effecting the successful accomplishment of the house-work, with its intricacies and interdependencies which render constant personal oversight impossible. Of course the proprietor

has much trouble with the "help," and there are frequent changes among them; but the body of the company remains the same, and some of the servants have been here for several seasons.

Certainly one is obliged to look elsewhere than to wages for a cause of better work as showing a finer moral fibre, if I may judge from my twenty-six cents a day. I dare say that mine is the minimum wage. The *chef* told me that he gets sixty dollars a month, and I fancy that his is the maximum sum. It is purely a guess, but I venture it, that the average among us would not exceed five dollars a week. Five dollars a week above the necessaries of life will buy much among the commonest proletariat. Under certain conditions that, or even a less sum, might buy industrious and almost continuous effort for fourteen or eighteen hours a day, but not, I fancy, in the present economic condition of household servants in this country. There must be other causes to account for that.

The want of time which is at one's own command is the commonest objection urged against domestic service as accounting for the ready choice of harder work with far less of creature comfort, but with definite limits and entire disposing of the rest of one's day. Stronger than

this, I fancy, as an objection, is a social disability which attaches to service, and under the sway of which a house-maid has not the prospect of so good a marriage, socially considered, as a factory girl, who earns a scanty living, but is subject to no one's command outside of the factory gates.

The strength of social conventions is a force to be reckoned with among the working classes. It may seem that below the standing of folk gentle by birth and breeding there are no social standards or social barriers of serious strength. I begin to suspect that distinctions are as clearly made on one side of that line as the other. Very certain I am that the upper servants here and the nurses and house-maids are removed from us of the clothes-washing and dish-washing and floor-scrubbing fraternity by a very considerable social gulf.

A course of eighteen hours of continuous daily duty soon gives one a surprising relish for the pleasure of doing as you please. I know now something of the delight of a "Sunday off." I got my first leave of absence one afternoon when I was allowed to go to the village of Central Valley to have my boots mended. Not since I was a small boy at boarding-school have I felt the same vivid pleasure in going freely forth,

knowing that, for the time, I was my own master; and when I returned to the hotel, it was very much with the school-boy's feeling of passing again under the yoke.

CHAPTER IV

A HIRED MAN AT AN ASYLUM

WILKESBARRE, PENNSYLVANIA,
Saturday, September 19, 1891.

I HAVE a wide sweep of country to cover from the "—— House" in the Highlands above the Hudson, where I served as a porter, and received with my wages a reference to the effect that my work was done "faithfully and well," to the coal regions of Pennsylvania in the valley of the Susquehanna.

My spirits rise at every recollection of the journey. For days I walked through the crisp autumn air, breathing its tingling freshness, and barely sensible of fatigue.

The way led me over the rich farm-lands of Orange County, and across the Delaware, and through the lonely wilderness of the Pennsylvania border, until I emerged upon the hills above the Susquehanna, and caught sight of the splendid valley, with its native beauty hideously marred by the blackened trails of forest fires

and the monstrous heaps of culm that mark the mouth of the coal-pits.

So far work has not failed me, unless I mark as an exception the single case when I began a search, and brought it abruptly to an end by descending suddenly upon a camping party of friends.

Quietly and mysteriously, I fancy, to the other servants, I appeared among them at the "—— House," and with as little notice I tried to steal away. Instead of going to the kitchen at five o'clock on that Wednesday morning for scrubbing-water, I took to the road with my pack, and left behind me the "—— House" awaking to life in the servants' quarters.

I had been a gang-laborer and a hotel porter, and now I wondered what my next rôle was to be. But the feeling was simply a genial curiosity, and was free from the timid shrinking with which I set out from the minister's house in Wilton, and my lodgings at Highland Falls. Then it was under the spur of self-compulsion that I launched afresh upon this fortuitous life. With strong animal instinct I had clung to any haven where shelter and food were secure. Now I warmly welcomed a freer courage born of experience. Not too sure of newly gained powers, but like a boy learning to swim, I fan-

cied that I felt the strength of some confidence in the novel element. Light-hearted in spite of my pack, which gained weight with every step, I walked briskly along the country roads, charmed with everything I saw, and feeling sure that my wages would see me through to another job. Was it a real acquisition, and had I learned to catch the strange pleasure of this fugitive life? or did the difference lie in the bracing cool of the morning, and the beauty of the open country, and the sense of freedom after long restraint, and, most subtly of all, in that little, hoarded balance in my purse?

It was nightfall when I entered Middletown, and too late to look for work. With my eye upon the rows of cottages which line the street by which I entered the town, I soon found a boarding-house for workmen. A bed could be had for twenty cents. At a bakery near by I got a loaf of bread and a quart of milk for a dime, and was thus supplied with a supper and breakfast. Twelve hours of unbroken sleep fell to me that night, and in the cool of a threatening morning I set out to find work. The scaffolding about a brick building in process of erection drew my attention, and I applied for a job as a hod-carrier, but found no demand there for further unskilled labor. The boss in charge re-

fused me with some show of petulance, as though annoyed by repeated appeals. He was not more cheerful, but was politely communicative enough when I asked after the likelihood of my finding work in the town. "There is no business doing," he said. "The bottom has fallen out of this place. There's two men looking for every job here, and my advice to you is to go somewhere else."

At the head of the street I came upon the foundation work of another building, which, I learned, was to be an armory. Here the boss instantly offered me a job, if I could lay brick or do the work of a mason, but of unskilled labor he said that he had an abundant supply. "But yonder," he added, "is the Asylum, and much work is in progress on the grounds, and there, surely, is your best chance of employment."

The Asylum was a State Homœopathic Institution for the Insane. I could see the large brick buildings on the highest area of spacious grounds, which spread away in easy undulations, with their natural beauty heightened by the tasteful work of a landscape gardener.

Near the entrance to the grounds I came upon a large force of laborers digging a ditch for a water-main. The boss refused me a place, but not without evident regret at the necessity, and

he was at pains to explain to me that, already on that morning, he had been obliged to turn away half a dozen men.

It was with no great expectation of success at finding work there that I began walking somewhat aimlessly through the Asylum grounds. The first person whom I met was an old Irish gardener. He painfully stood erect as I questioned him as to whom I should apply for a job, and supported himself with one hand on my shoulder, while he told me of the medical superintendent, and the overseer, and the foreman, who are in charge of various departments of the work. Presently his face brightened with excitement as he pointed to a large man who was walking toward one of the buildings, and he pushed me in his direction with an eager injunction to apply to him, for he was the overseer of the grounds.

The overseer listened to my request and read in silence my reference from the "—— House," and looked me over for a moment, and then abruptly ordered me to report at seven o'clock on the next morning, adding, as he disappeared within the building, that he was paying his men a dollar and a half a day.

The old Irish gardener showed the heartiest pleasure at my success, and directed me to a

boarding-house near the Asylum grounds, where I was soon settled, and where at noon I ate a memorable dinner, the first square meal for thirty-six hours, and the first one which had about it the elements of decent comfort since I left Mrs. Flaherty's table.

At seven o'clock on the next morning I was one of a gang of twenty laborers who were digging a sewer-ditch. The ditch had passed the farther edge of a meadow, and must cut its way through the field to the Asylum buildings, two hundred yards beyond. Its course was marked by a straight cut through the sod which was to furnish us a guide. Some of the men took their former places in unfinished portions of the work, and the rest of us fell apart, leaving intervals of about three yards from man to man. With the cut as a guide, and with the single instruction to keep the ditch two feet wide, we began to wield our picks and shovels. A thick, unmoving fog lay damp upon the meadow, already saturated with dew. The sun-rays, gathering penetrating power as they pierced the fog, were soon producing the effect of prickly heat. This atmosphere, surcharged with moisture and lifeless in its sluggish weight, yet quick with stinging heat, was a medium in which the actual work done was out of proportion to its cost in potential en-

ergy. In the forceful Irishism of one of the laborers: "It was a muggy morning, and a man must do his work twice over to get it done."

By dint of strenuous industry and careful imitation of the methods of the other men, I managed to keep pace with them. I saw from the first that the work would be hard; and in point of severity it proved all that I expected, and more. To ply a pick and urge a shovel for five continuous hours calls for endurance. Down sweeps your pick with a mighty stroke upon what appears yielding, presentable earth, only to come into contact with a rock concealed just below the surface, a contact which sends a violent jar through all your frame, causing vibrations which end in the sensation of an electric shock at your finger-tips. A few repetitions of this experience are distinctly disheartening in effect. Besides, the sun has cleared the fog, and is shining full upon us through the still air. The trench is well below the surface, now, and we work with the sun beating on our aching backs, and our heads buried in the ditch, where we breathed the hot air heavy with the smell of fresh soil, and the sweat drips from our faces upon the damp clay.

By nine o'clock what strength and courage I have left seem oozing from every pore. The

demoralization is complete, and I know that only "the shame of open shame" holds me to my work. I dig mechanically on through another sluggish hour of torment; and then I come to, and find myself breathing deeply, with long regular breaths, in the miracle of "second wind," with fresh energy flowing like a stream of new life through my body.

Through all the working hours of the day the foreman sat upon a pile of tools silently watching us at the job. Now and then he politely urged that the ditch be kept not less than two feet wide, and nothing could have been further from his manner and speech than any approach to abusing the men. It was his evident purpose to treat us well, but the act of his oversight, under the conditions of our employment, involved a practical wasting of his day, and cast upon us the suspicion of dishonesty.

On the next morning, which was Saturday, the foreman sent me down the ditch, where the pipe was already laid, and ordered me, with two other men, to fill in the earth. Like a line of earthworks lay the "stubborn glebe" above the trench. The work of shovelling it back into place seemed easy at first, and was easy, as compared with the digging; but the wet, cohesive clay that lined the ditch's brink yielded only

to the pressure of a compulsion very persistently applied. We quit on that evening at five o'clock, with a full day's pay for nine hours' work.

The foreman met me on Monday morning with an order for yet another change. At the barn I should find "Hunt," he said, and I was to report to him as his "help." Hunt proved to be a good-looking, taciturn teamster, who had just hitched his horses to his "truck," and he told me to get aboard. The "truck" was a heavy four-wheeled vehicle without a box, but with, instead, a stout platform suspended from the axle-trees, and resting but a few inches from the ground. Standing upon this we drove all day from point to point about the grounds, attending to manifold needs.

We had first to cart the milk-cans from the dairy to the kitchen. This errand took us to the rear of the Asylum buildings, where the entries open upon a series of quadrangular courts. Then from entry to entry we drove, gathering up great bags of soiled clothes, which lay in heaps about the doors, and we carted these to the laundry. Then back to the kitchen we went, and took on a load of huge cans filled with swill, and transferred them to a large pig-sty at the edge of the wood, below the meadow, and

there emptied their contents into hogsheads, from which, at stated hours, the swill is baled out to the loud-squealing herd within. Again we made the round of the entries, this time to gather up the waste barrels which stood full of ashes, and the results of the morning's sweeping; and having emptied these, we replaced them for a fresh supply. Then we drove to the garden, and carted from that quarter to the kitchen several loads of vegetables.

The afternoon was consumed in supplying the demand for ice. Embedded in a mass of hay in the ice-house, the ice must first be uncovered, and the cakes, frozen together, must be pried apart with a crowbar and then dragged over the melting surface to the door, and finally loaded upon the truck.

We first carted it to the barn-yard, where we washed it by playing water over it with a hose, and then to the kitchen wing, where we chopped it into smaller pieces and threw these into openings which communicated with the large refrigerators inside. Again and again was this process repeated, until an adequate supply had been furnished, and then there remained before six o'clock time enough to cart to the pigs their evening meal from the kitchen.

With slight changes in detail, this remained

the order of our work through the few days of my stay. I held the job long enough to find myself ensconced at the Asylum, and then I told the foreman that I wished to go. He looked at me in some surprise, and began to argue the point. "You'd better stay by your job," he said. "It is not the best work, but we'll find better for you before long." I thanked him heartily, and told him I was interested to learn that, but that I felt obliged to go. He shook hands with me, and cordially wished me luck, and told me to apply to him for work if I happened again in those parts, and added that I could get my wages by calling at the office on the next afternoon, which was the regular pay-day.

A free day was highly useful now, for my clothes and boots were seriously in need of repair. The pack contained the means of much mending, and by dinner-time my coat and trousers were patched, and my stockings were stoutly darned. But the boots were beyond me. Already they had cost me dear, for a dollar, the earnings of four days as a porter, had gone for a pair of new soles, and now another outlay, enormous in its relation to my means, was an imperative necessity.

I had made an appointment with a cobbler for

an early hour in the afternoon, precisely as one would with a dentist; for while he was at work on my only pair of boots, I had to sit by in my stocking feet. Secretly I welcomed the necessity, in spite of its calamitous cost. I could take a book with me, and read with a clear conscience. The cobbler was smoking his after-dinner cigar when I entered his shop. He was little inclined to talk; and when he had finished his smoke he picked up a boot, and bent over it with an air of absorption. I was soon lost in my book.

The work was nearly done when some movement of his drew my attention to the cobbler. I had been struck by his appearance, and now my interest deepened. Away from his bench it would not have occurred to one to assign him to that calling. He was an old man, whose muscular figure had acquired a stoop at the shoulders like that of some seasoned scholar. His features were clean-cut and strong. His blue eyes had a look of much shrewdness and force. There were deep lines about his mouth and in his forehead, which spoke of masterful conflict in life. Meeting him in the dress of a gentleman, you would have said that he was a public man of some distinction, and with close acquaintance with affairs. In reality, he had sat for fifty

years upon that bench. He was growing communicative now; and from his personal history I tried to divert him to his views of life, thinking that I must have found a philosopher in a man whose opportunities for reflection had been so great. But his talk was flowing freely, and would take its own course, careless of my promptings. I settled myself to listen, and my interested attention seemed to fire him with new zest. From personal narrative it was an easy step to events of our national history, and he warmed to these under the inspiration of the life of some great man connected with each. General Scott was his first hero; and touching upon details of his history, which were wholly unknown to me, he pictured the inborn, warlike spirit of the man with amazing appreciation, and finally quoted the judgment of the Duke of Wellington, who, he said, had declared of Scott that, "as a general, he stood without a superior." Here he paused for a moment to explain that the Duke of Wellington was a personage of exceptional military experience, whose judgments in such matters were entitled to the highest respect.

The Civil War and Mr. Lincoln as the chief figure of those troublous times next inspired him. It was with no mean insight into the issues involved that he glowed with the thought

of a constitutional question grown to sharp national conflict, and settled at infinite cost, and transmitted as a most sacred trust, to be guarded with eternal vigilance. But the climax was reached when he turned back on his course, and began afresh, with the Father of his Country as his theme. The incident of the cherry-tree was repeated with sublime faith, and with highly dramatic effect. Encouraged by his success and my absorbed attention, he next recounted the events of that fateful June morning when the allied American and British forces were nearing Fort Duquesne. With keenest appreciation of the fatal irony of it, he repeated again and again his own version of the reply made to the warning of young Washington by General Braddock: "You young buckskin! you teach a British officer how to fight?"

A chivalric spirit led him now to speak of "Lady Washington." This moved him most of all, and when he declared that he would repeat for me some lines composed by her, which he had learned by heart as a boy, his emotions were almost beyond control. His job was finished now, and he drew himself up, and made a strong effort to modulate his voice, which was trembling with feeling. The lines had an evident magic for him, and he repeated them

with great throbs of emotion, while his eyes grew dim:

> Saw ye my hero?
> Saw ye my hero?
>
> I saw not your hero;
> But I'm told he's in the van,
> When the battle just began,
> And he stays to take care of his men.
>
> Oh ye gods! I give you my charge
> To protect my hero, George,
> And return him safe home to my arms.

Then, bending toward me, he placed a trembling hand on my knee; and looking dimly into my eyes, he said, in husky tones: "And they did, didn't they?" I assented earnestly, charmed by his sincerity and enthusiasm, only hopeful that there was some mistake in the unexpected glimpse of Lady Washington in the character of a poet, and like my friend struggling with feeling that I found it hard to suppress, and which expressed, would have been sadly out of harmony with the scriptural injunction to "weep with them that weep."

There was a charm in the old cobbler's harangue, which I felt for long. Even his views of life seemed to appear in these crude enthusiasms upon general themes. There was a note of op-

timism which one could not fail to catch, and to respect in a man who, for fifty years, had honestly earned his living on a cobbler's bench. His sense of proprietorship in his country, and of natural right to high personal pride in her history, conveyed themselves to you as strong convictions, and you understood something of the power which dwells in a people who feel thus toward their country, and who share in her control.

An hour later I was at the Asylum on the errand of getting my pay. I had anticipated the appointed time by a few minutes, and was the first of the workmen in the office. The clerk was in his place, however; and my appearance, hat in hand, furnished him with the signal for drawing from his desk the receipt-forms, upon which the men acknowledge the payments by their signatures. In the bustle of the business just beginning, the clerk turned upon me and asked, somewhat brusquely, if I could write my name, or whether he should write it for me, and I affix my mark. So unexpected was the question, that I was conscious at first of some bewilderment, and then of a rising resentment against the fact that such a question should be put to an American workman. I said that I had acquired the habit of signing my own name when

necessary; but I might have spared myself that folly, for the clerk hastened to explain with the kindest consideration that, of all the laborers whom he habitually pays off, scarcely half can write; "although," he added, with an admirable touch of fairness, "a very small proportion of the illiterate are native-born Americans." I am afraid that my resentment had its source in a grotesquely foolish feeling. I have been mistaken for a drunkard, and a detective, and a disreputable double of myself, and have been made a bogey of to frighten children into obedience withal, but not once, so far as I know, have I been taken for a gentleman. And if the truth must be told, I fear that the very success of my disguise is somewhat chagrinning at times.

There was no wrench on the next morning in parting with the family with whom I boarded, unless my landlady shared my regret at leaving. She was a meek little woman who slaved heroically at household work to support her daughter, who studied stenography and typewriting, and her idle husband, who led the life of a professional invalid. He had tried upon me highly colored tales of his career as a soldier, and of what he would have done in life but for his ill-health, tales which I soon learned to interrupt with small services to his wife, and he

gave me up as hopelessly unsympathetic. A baseball game on the Asylum grounds attracted a large crowd one afternoon; and as Hunt and I drove past on an errand, I caught sight of the ex-soldier, who, at his home, was too great a sufferer to contribute even a helping hand at the housework toward his own support, but who here was dancing in vigor of delight over a two-base hit.

It was clear that a rate of progress which had carried me not even so far as the border line of Pennsylvania, during nearly two months, would require a considerable portion of a lifetime in which to accomplish the three thousand miles before me. I resolved upon more energetic tramping as a wiser policy for, at least, the immediate future.

A rough plan was soon formed. I had saved nearly six dollars. It was Wednesday morning. I would give three days to uninterrupted walk, and by Friday evening I should reach Wilkesbarre. The whole of Saturday, if so much time were needed, could then be given to a search for employment; and the rest of Sunday would put me in trim to begin on Monday morning the work which would provide in a few days for present needs, and furnish a balance with which to begin the tramp once more.

At an early hour I was upon the high-road which leads to Port Jervis. The day was a perfect type of the best season of our northern climate, cloudless but for a fleecy embankment behind the purple hills to the north, flooded with a glorious light touched with grateful warmth, and which revealed with articulate distinctness every visible object in the crystal-clear air—an air so pure and cool that it spurred you to your quickest step, and sent bounding through you a glad delight in breath and life.

In all the landscape was the richness of color and the vividness of a transfigured world. An early frost had touched the foliage; the leaves of the hickory-trees and elms were rustling crisply at their tips, and the sumach deepened into a crimson that matched the color of its clustered seeds, while the oaks and maples maintained the dark luxuriance of their summer leafage, boastful of a hardihood which would succumb only to the keener cold of the later autumn.

Up hill and down dale my road led me, where substantial farm-houses, and enormous barns, and fields of standing corn, and herds of cattle in the pasture-lands, all indicated the necessaries and even the comforts of life in rich abundance, and emphasized the wonder that from

such surroundings should come the recruits who ceaselessly throng our crowded towns.

A few miles farther on the whole topography of the country changed. I had passed through the village of Otisville and was walking in the direction of Huguenot when my way carried me to a hillside from which I could see the long stretch of a valley, reaching far to the westward, and lined on both sides, with almost artificial regularity, by ranges of hills, which rose sharply from the plain below. Through a break at the north the Delaware flows, and, crossing the plain-like valley, disappears among the southern hills, while the valley itself, in almost unbroken symmetry, reaches on to the west.

At the foot of the northern range, and on the eastern bank of the river, is the town of Port Jervis. Its outer streets are the light, airy thoroughfares of the usual American town, faced by small wooden cottages, each with its plot of ground devoted in front to a few square yards of turf, and carefully economized behind the house for the purpose of supporting fruit-trees and providing a vegetable garden.

The great number of these individual homes, as indicating the manner of life of multitudes of the working classes in provincial towns, seemed to me to mark a conspicuous absence of crowded

tenement living; and on its positive side to indicate at least the possibility of wholesome family life and of much home comfort. Certainly my experience at Highland Falls and at Middletown confirms this impression. In each of those cases the people with whom I stayed owned their home and the plot of land about it, which contributed thriftily toward the family support. The houses were ephemeral wooden cottages, done in the degrading ugliness inspired by the Queen Anne revival, and furnished in a taste even more florid, and they were not overclean. And yet they were comfortable homes, in which we fared handsomely, eating meat three times a day, and varieties of vegetables and admirable home-made bread, and knew no stint of sugar or butter, and slept in good beds in not too crowded rooms in an upper story.

All about me here, and reaching down the long vistas of communicating streets, were the same external conditions, until I entered the closely built up "brick blocks" of the business quarter of the town. I could but think how characteristic of our smaller cities is this separate individual home-life of the wage-earning classes, and how increasingly are the improved means of transportation rendering like surroundings possible for the workmen of the larger towns.

Having crossed the Delaware River, about four o'clock I began a walk through a region no less beautiful than that through which I had passed in the morning. My way lay in the valley, directly under the steep hills that wall it in on the north. Their densely wooded sides cast deep shadows obliquely across the road, and in this grateful shade I walked on, listening to the songs of birds and the murmur of mountain-streams, and the cooling sound of spray splashing from ledge to ledge of moss-grown rocks.

At sunset I entered the village of Milford, which nestles securely at the foot of the mountains of Pike County, a beautiful village of wide, well-shaded streets, where there was little to mar the elegant simplicity of dignified country homes, untouched by harrowing attempts at the fantastic.

By eight o'clock I was fast asleep in a workmen's boarding-house, and at sunrise on the next morning I was on the road which turns sharply up the mountain-side. A dense mist lay upon the valley, but my way soon led me up to the freer air, until, upon the summit of a ridge, I reached the clear sunshine, and could see the emerging ranges of hills to the east and south and the white mist resting motionless on the valley below.

Up and up I climbed into higher altitudes. Each elevation appeared, as I approached it, the topmost crest of the mountain, and yet I gained it only to find another rough steep beyond.

There could scarcely have been a sharper contrast with the journey of the previous day. The graceful undulations of rich farm-lands and the broad plain of the Huguenot flats, checkered with field and forest and pasture, and traversed by well-kept roads, and dotted over with the buildings of prosperous farms and thriving villages, had given place, in the panorama of my journey, to rugged mountains, steep and densely wooded, except where, on some less hopeless site at the very margin of cultivation, a settler had cleared the land and begun a conflict with the stony soil in an almost desperate struggle for a living. Here were mountain-roads that went from bad to worse, until, before I had crossed the range, my way degenerated into a narrow, rocky trail, overgrown with weeds, and along which I walked for a stretch of six or eight miles without passing a dwelling.

That was in the afternoon. At a little before twelve o'clock I had come to Shohola Falls. There, in a "hollow" on the bank of a mountain-stream, stood a saw-mill, surrounded by piles of bleaching boards and a few rough, unpainted

cottages. Through the open door of a shop I caught sight of an old carpenter bending over his bench. He entered very readily into directions about the way and told me that I had but to follow a direct road to Kimble, and from there there was no difficulty in the way to Tafton, which, he said, was as far as I could get that day. Then, with an eye on my pack, he asked pointedly what I was peddling. The forgotten magazines recurred to me and I opened my pack and handed him a copy. The frequent change of subject and the variety of illustration fixed for a time his excited attention.

Half a score of young children now crowded about the door, and edged cautiously into the shop, fixing upon me eyes wide open with the hunger of curiosity. They were all barefooted and ragged, and not one of them was clean, and at a single glance you saw that, mountain-bred and young as they were, there was no wholesome color in their faces, and that the very beauty of childhood was already fading before a persistent diet from the frying-pan.

The old carpenter presently turned upon me with the air of one who was master of the situation.

"Would you like to sell some of them books around here?" he asked.

I told him that I should.

"Well, you're a stranger here, ain't you?"

"Yes."

"Then don't you try it. A young fellow done this place out of more'n fifty dollars last spring, and we're kind o' careful of strangers now."

I sat on the door-step to rest, and invited the children to look at the pictures, which they did, hesitatingly at first, with timid advances, in which curiosity struggled with their fear of the unfamiliar. But they grew bolder as I invented stories to match the illustrations, and presently they were all nestling about me in the ease of absorbed attention. One little girl of four or five, who had eyed me at first with an anxious look of alarm, now stood leaning over my shoulder with an arm about my neck, and her soft brown hair, escaped from her sun-bonnet, touching my face, while she looked down upon the pictures, and I could feel her breath quickening as the story neared its climax.

I pressed on presently, and the children ran by my side, asking for yet one story more, and finally calling their good-byes and waving their hands to me as I disappeared around a curve in the road.

A few miles farther on I came to a lonely farm-house, where I knocked in quest of a dinner.

The open door revealed a woman's face, so sad and worn, so full of care and of weary years of slavish drudgery, that quite instinctively I began to apologize, and to conceal my real purpose in aimless inquiry about the way.

"I do not know," she said; "but won't you come in? The boys will soon be at home for dinner, and they can tell you."

Her voice was soft and sweet, and her manner so reassuring that I gladly followed her into the sitting-room, where she introduced me to her daughter, a slender, dark young woman, who sat sewing by an open window.

I hastened to make myself known as a workman on my way to Wilkesbarre, where I hoped to get employment, and I told them of my encounter with the carpenter at the Falls. They smiled as though the flavor of his humor was not lost to them, and they spoke of other characters at the settlement quite as odd as he.

Both women were dressed in the plainest calico, and without a touch of ornament, and the house was poor; poor to the verge of poverty; but the walls were free from chromoes and worsted mottoes, and showed, instead, a few good engravings, and the rag-carpet on the floor blent in accordant colors, and curtains hung neatly at the windows.

Dinner was waiting, and presently the mother said that we would delay it no longer for the boys. We sat down at a table in a rough shed which opened from the sitting-room. A spotless cloth covered the board, and the service was simple and tasteful, and there was the uncommon luxury of napkins. The dinner moved with unembarrassed ease. We talked of the surrounding country, and its resemblance to other regions, and of the political situation. The mother led the talk, and tactfully guarded it from any approach to silence or to topics too intimate. Once, however, she touched lightly upon a former home in a prosperous corner of another State, and instantly I felt the hint of some family tragedy.

And now her two sons came shuffling in, rough and ruddy from their work, clean-cut, well-bred young fellows, far too young I thought to be "hauling logs," and I could read an agony of anxiety in their mother's face as she watched them wearily take their seat on the vacant bench by the table. They had been left in the care of the work in the absence of their father, who had gone some miles to a neighboring settlement, "on business," their mother added, blushing deeply, while the boys looked hard at their plates.

The afternoon's tramp lay through the wildest part of that wild region. From Shohola Falls to Kimble the direct road is one which leads straight across the mountain, and is almost unbroken, and seldom used. In all its course I passed but two or three farms; and these revealed a pitiful poverty, in the wretched hovels which did service as farm-houses and barns, and, more plainly, if possible, in the squalor of little children who gaped at me from among high weeds behind tottering fences.

On I went for miles, over a road so lonely that it recalled the loneliness of the sea, and, like the sea, the sweep of heaving mountains seemed unbroken in a boundless monotony. And then the landscape had in it the beauty and the majesty of the sea, and the whispering of the wind over vast fields of stunted pines and scrub oaks answered to the wash of waves, and bore a fragrance and freshness to match with ocean breezes.

Late in the afternoon my way descended abruptly by a more frequented road in the direction of Kimble. Presently I could see a railway and a canal, and I felt a little, I fancied, as an explorer must upon emerging, once more, into the region of the explored.

I wished to know the distance and the way to

Tafton, and so I inquired of the first person whom I met. She was a milkmaid, and so picturesque a figure, that I felt a pleasurable excitement in the chance of a word with her. Her calico skirt was tucked up a little at one side. Under one bare arm she carried a milking-stool, and a bucket in the other hand. Her sun-bonnet had fallen from her head, and hung like a scholar's hood on her back. The sunlight was playing in glory about her face and in her abundant auburn hair.

My excitement suddenly took another form; for, as I lifted my hat in apologetic inquiry, there fell about me a shower of oak-leaves, which I had placed in the crown for the sake of added coolness.

The milkmaid had met me with a clear, frank look between the eyes; but she shrank a little now, and could not resist a startled glance, full of questioning, as to what further my hat might contain, and she answered me more with the purpose, I fancy, of being quickly rid of a wanderer of such doubtful mind, than of adding to his information.

The walk from Kimble to Tafton, I presently found, could be shortened by taking a path through the forest; and I was soon panting up the hillside, grateful for the long twilight which

promised to see me safe, before the darkness, to my destination.

On the way I fell in with a young quarryman, whose home was near Tafton, and who willingly became my guide. He was only sixteen, but already he had worked for four years at his trade. His gaunt, angular body showed plainly the marks of arrested development, when the growth of the boy had hardened prematurely into an almost deformed figure of a confirmed laborer.

He lunged clumsily beside me, and was inclined to be taciturn at first; but he warmed presently to readier speech, and talked frankly of his work and manner of life. At twelve he had been taken from school and sent to the quarry to help his father support a growing family. And then his days had settled into a ceaseless round of hard work, from which there was no escape for him until he should be twenty-one, an age which appeared to his perception at an almost infinite distance.

His attitude to his present circumstances was not a resentful one. He seemed to think it most natural that he should help in the family support; or, rather, no other possibility seemed to occur to him. It was soon apparent, too, that his chiefest hope and ambition, with reference

to his ultimate freedom from that necessity, were centred in a possible return to school advantages. He spoke of his efforts to study after work hours, and of the hardness of such a course, and owned to the fear of insurmountable difficulties in the future. His reticence was gone now, and he was speaking with hearty freedom, and with his eyes all alight with the dream of his life. I told him something of the increased opportunities of education for men who must make their own way, and of how many men I had known who had supported themselves through college.

We parted at the edge of the forest, where we reached his home, a frail shell of a shanty, standing upon stumps of felled trees, and he was welcomed by the sight of his mother, chopping wood at the roadside, and a troop of ragged children playing about the open door.

At nightfall, on the next evening, I entered Wilkesbarre, but I got so far only by virtue of a long lift in a farmer's cart, which carried me, by a stroke of great good fortune, over much the longest part of the day's journey.

So far my plan had been carried out. It was Friday evening, and I was safe in Wilkesbarre, somewhat worn by the walk of rather over eighty miles, and with an increased dislike for my bur-

densome pack, but with every prospect of being fit for work so soon as I should find it. My success in that direction had been so uniform, that instead of sleeping in the open, as I had done on the night before, I allowed myself the luxury of a bed in a cheap boarding-house, and a supper and a breakfast at its table, before beginning my search. Further good fortune awaited me, for Saturday morning lent itself with cheerful brightness to the enterprise. At an early hour I stepped out into a busy street of the city, sore and stiff with walking, but high of hope, and not without a certain elevation of spirit, which might have warned me of a fall.

Work on the city sewers was being carried through the public square. I found the contractor, and applied for work as a digger. Very courteously he took the pains to explain to me that he was obliged to keep on hand, and pay for full time, a force of men far larger than was demanded, except by certain exigencies, and that he could not increase their number. Not far from the square another gang of workmen were laying the curbstones and repairing the street, but here I was again refused. I lifted my eyes to the site of a stone building that was nearing completion, and there, too, no added hands were needed.

By this time I had neared the post-office, and I found letters awaiting me there which claimed the next half hour. But even more embarrassing, as a check to further search, was a free reading-room, which now invited me to files of New York newspapers, in which I knew that I should find details of recent interesting political developments at Rochester and Saratoga, not to mention possible fresh complications in the more exciting game of politics abroad. I went in, and like Charles Kingsley's young monk, Philemon, who, wandering one day farther than ever before from the monastery in the desert, chanced upon the ruins of an old Egyptian temple; and mindful of a warning against such seduction, yet guiltily charmed by the rare beauty of the frescoes, prayed aloud, "Lord, turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity," but looked, nevertheless—I looked, too, and I read on until mounting remorse robbed the reading of all pleasure and drove me to my task again.

But I had fallen once; and, by a sad fatality, scarcely had I renewed the search, with weakened power of resistance, when I stumbled upon a fiercer temptation in the form of a library, which announced in plain letters its freedom to the public until the hour of nine in the evening.

Forgetful of my character as a workman;

miserably callous to the claim of duty to find employment, if possible; and in any case, to live honestly the life which I had assumed, I entered the wide-open, hospitable doors, and was soon lost to other thought, and even to the sense of shame, in the absorbing interest of favorite books.

In the lonely tramp across the mountains of Pike County I walked sometimes for miles with no opportunity of quenching a growing thirst, when suddenly I came upon a mountain-spring that trickled from the solid rock, and formed a little pool in its shade, where I threw myself on the ground, and, with a glorious sense of relief, drank deeply of its cold water. The analogy is a weak one, for the physical relief and the momentary pleasure but faintly suggest the prolonged intellectual delight, after two months of unslackened thirst.

Here was an inexhaustible supply, and there were polite librarians who responded cheerfully to your slightest wish; and, best of all, there was an inner door which disclosed a reading-room, where perfect quiet reigned, and comfortable chairs invited you to grateful ease, and shelves on shelves of books were free to your eager hand.

To pass from one writer to another, among

the volumes that lay on the table, lingering over long-loved passages, or dipping lightly here and there, absorbing pleasure from the very touch of the book and the sight of the well-printed page, held by the charm of some characteristic phrase, and finally to sink into the folds of an easy-chair with a store of books within ready reach—what delight can equal such satisfaction of a craving sense?

There through the livelong day I sit, and through the early evening, until I am roused by the sound of slamming shutters which is the janitor's signal for nine o'clock, the hour of closing for the night.

Taking my hat and stick I walk out into the gas-lit street, and into our modern world, with its artificialities and its social and labor problems; and I remember that I am a proletaire out of a job, and that with shameless neglect of duty I have been idling through priceless hours. Crestfallen, I hurry to my boarding-house, longing, like any conscious-stricken inebriate, to lose remorse in sleep.

As I walk to my lodgings a certain fellow-feeling warms me with fresh sympathy for my kind. I have met with my first reverse, not a serious one, but still the search for work for the first time in my experience has been fruitless through

most of a morning. Instead of persevering industriously, I yield weakly to the desire to forget my present lot, and the duty it entails, in the intoxication that beckons to me from free books. That happens to be my temptation, and I fall.

Another workman of my class, in precisely my position, encounters, not one chance temptation which he might escape by taking another street, but at every corner open doors which invite him to the companionship of other men, who will help him to forget his discouragements so long as his savings last. And as we are both turned into the street at night, in what do we differ as regards our moral strength? He yielded to his temptation, and I to mine.

CHAPTER V

A FARM HAND

WILLIAMSPORT, LYCOMING COUNTY, PA.,
Saturday, 3 October, 1891.

FROM Wilkesbarre it was an easy day's march to the village of Pleasant Hill, which lies in the way to Williamsport. The only notable incident of the tramp was one which confirmed me in an early formed policy. I have avoided railways, and have walked in preference along the country roads, as affording better opportunities of inter course with people. But in going on that morning from Wilkesbarre to the ferry which crossed the river to Plymouth, I took the advice of a gate-keeper at a railway crossing and started down the track on a long trestle as a short cut to the ferry. All went well until I was half way over, and then two coal trains passed simultaneously in opposite directions, and I hung by my hands from the framework at one side, while the engineer and fireman on the locomotive nearest me laughed heartily at the figure that I cut, with the side of each car grazing my

pack, and my hold on the railing growing visibly slacker.

It was a little after nightfall when I reached the tavern at Pleasant Hill. Of my wages I had fifty cents left. I questioned the proprietor as to the demand for work in his community. He was quite encouraging. Only that afternoon, he said, one of the best farmers of the neighborhood had been inquiring in the village for a possible man, and to the best of his knowledge he had not found one. I said that I should apply at his farm in the morning, and then I broached the subject of entertainment. We soon struck a bargain for a supper and breakfast, and the privilege of a bed on the hay; but when, after supper, I asked to be directed to the barn, the landlord silently led the way to a little room upstairs, and there wished me good-night.

In the early morning he pointed out to me the road to his neighbor's farm, which I followed with ready success. I was penniless now, and had only an uncertain chance of work. And then, if the farmer should ask me, I should be obliged to own to inexperience, and the demand for farm-hands I thought must be limited, at a date so far into the autumn. But the morning was exquisite, and the buoyancy that it bred was

an easy match for misgivings, so that it was with a light heart that I turned from the road into a lane which leads to the house of the farmer, whom I shall call Mr. Hill.

All about me were the marks of thrift. The fences stood straight and stout, with an air of lasting security. On a rising ledge above the lane was the farm-house, a small, unpainted wooden cottage, bleached to the rich, deep brown of a well-colored meerschaum pipe, and as snug and tight as a pilot's schooner. Near it was a summer-kitchen that seemed fairly to glow with conscious pride in its cleanness, and the very foot-path from the gate to the cottage-door was swept like a threshing floor.

On the door-step sat a girl in a calico dress of delicate pink, with a dark gingham apron concealing all its front. She was shelling peas into a milk-pan which rested on her lap, and the morning sunlight was in her flaxen hair, and showed you the delicate freshness of a pink-and-white complexion. Sober hazel eyes were fixed on me as I walked up the foot-path, and of us two I was the embarrassed one. I have not got over a certain timidity in asking for work, and each request is a sturdy effort of the will, with the rest of me in cowardly revolt, and a timid shrinking much in evidence I fear.

"Is this Mr. Hill's farm?" I ask, and I know that I am blushing deeply.

"Yes," says the young woman, with grave dignity and the most natural self-possession in the world.

"Is he at home?" I am sweating freely now, as I stand with my hat crushed between my hands, and the pack feeling like a mountain on my back.

"He is down at the pond on the edge of the farm." And her serious eyes follow the line of the long lane which sinks from the house with the downward slope of the land.

With her permission I leave the pack behind, and then follow the indicated way. The barn is on my right, a large, unpainted structure, stained by weather to as dark a hue as the house, but there are no loose boards about it, nor any rifts among the shingles, and the doors hang true on their hinges, and meet in well-adjusted touch. The cowyard and the pigsty flank the lane, and the neatness of the yard and the tightness of the troughs make clear that there is no waste of fodder there. Farther down and on my left is the wagon-house, as good a building almost as the cottage, and with much the same clean, strong compactness. There are no ploughs nor other farming tools lying exposed to the weather, no

signs of idle capital wasting with the wear of rust, but everywhere the active, thrifty strength of wise economy.

Two men are at work at the pond, and I pick my man at once. They are plainly brothers, but the Mr. Hill of whom I am in search is the stronger-looking man, and is clearly in command of the job. I am reminded of a certain type which one comes to know on "the street," a clean-cut, vigorous man, who keeps his youth till sixty, and who, for many years, has had a masterful, compelling hand upon the conduct of affairs, has put railways through the West, and opened up mining regions, and knows the inner workings of legislatures and of much else besides.

I wait for a pause in the work, and try to screw my courage to the sticking-point; and then I tell Mr. Hill that the landlord at the tavern has sent me to him in the belief that he needs a man, and I add that I shall be glad of a job. Without preliminary questions Mr. Hill engages me on the spot, and makes me an offer of board and lodging, and seventy-five cents a day, which, he says, is the usual rate on the farms at that season. I close with the bargain, and ask to be set to work immediately. A minute later I am walking up the lane with a

message for Mrs. Hill, to the effect that I am the new "hired man," and that she will please give me, to take to the pond, a certain "broad hoe" from the wagon-house.

Mrs. Hill understands the situation at once; she makes no comment, but goes with me to the wagon-house, where she points out the hoe among other tools in a corner. She has said nothing so far, and I feel a little uncomfortable, but now she turns to me with a frank directness of manner that is very reassuring.

"I ain't got no room for you in the house, but I guess you'll be comfortable sleeping out here. You can fetch your grip, and I'll show you your bed."

Pack in hand, I follow her up the steps to the loft of the wagon-house, and she points to a cot near the farther window and a wooden chair beside it. "Some time to-day I'll make up your bed, and if there's anything you want you can tell me." This is her final word as she leaves me to return to the house. I slip on my overalls and take note of my new quarters. Windows at both ends of the loft provide ample ventilation. The cot is covered with a corn-husk mattress, as clean and fresh as a cock of new hay. The very floor is free from dust. The rafters hang thick with bunches of seed-

corn on the cob, with their outer husks removed and the inner husks drawn back and neatly interwoven, the whole effect suggesting stalactites in a cave. The air is fragrant with the perfume from slices of apples, that are closely threaded and hung up to dry in graceful festoons from rafter to rafter.

Five minutes later I am at work at the pond. The pond is an artificial one, created by a wooden dam. The water has been allowed to flow out, and the old woodwork is to be renewed.

My immediate task is to dig a ditch along the outer side of the rotting planks, so that they can be removed and replaced by new ones. I am soon alone on the job, for the farmers' work calls them elsewhere. The experience in the sewer-ditch at Middletown is all to my credit, and my spirits rise with the discovery that I can handle my pick and shovel more effectively, and with less sense of exhaustion. And then the stint is my own, and no boss stands guard over me as a dishonest workman. At least I am conscious of none, and I am working on merrily, when suddenly I become aware of my employer bending over the ditch and watching me intently.

It is a face very red with the heat and much

bespattered with mud, into which my tools sink gurglingly, that I turn up to him.

"How are you getting on?"

"Pretty well, thank you."

"You mustn't work too hard. All that I ask of a man is to work steady. Have an apple?"

He is gone in a moment, and I stand in the ditch eating the apple with immense relish, and thinking what a good sort that farmer is, and how thoroughly he understands the principle of getting his best work out of a man! He has appealed to my sense of honor by intrusting the job to me, and now he has won me completely to his interests by showing concern in mine.

The work is hard, and the morning hours are very long, but the labor achieves its own satisfaction as the task grows under one's self-directed effort, and there is no torture of body and soul in the surveillance of a slave-driving boss.

But I am thoroughly tired and very hungry when Mr. Hill calls to me from across the pond that it is time to go to dinner. I join him in haste, and we walk up the lane together, while he drives his team before him, and points out with evident pride the young colts and other stock in the pasture.

On a bench near the door of the summer-kitchen are two tin basins full of water, and

there we wash ourselves, drawing by means of a gourd-dipper from a brimming bucket near by any fresh supply of water that we want. A coarse, clean towel hangs over a roller above the bench, and at this we take our turns.

The dinner is a quiet meal, and tends to solemnity. Mrs. Hill and her daughter sit opposite the farmer and me. Little is said, but for me there is absorbing interest in the meal itself. It is worthy of the best traditions of country life, clean in all its appointments to a degree of spotlessness, really elegant in its quiet simplicity, and appetizing?—how was I ever to stop eating those potatoes that spread under the pressure of my fork into a mass of flaky deliciousness, or the ears of sweet-corn fresh from a late field, or the green peas that swim in a sweet stew of their own brewing, or, best of all, the little pond pickerel that are grilled to a crisp brown turn?

In our more artificial forms of living we habitually eat when we are not hungry, and drink when we are not thirsty, and we know little of the sheer physical delight in meat and drink when our natures seize joyously upon the means of life, and organs work in glad adaptation to function, and the organism, in full revival, responds to its environment!

The work moves uninterruptedly in the afternoon; and at six o'clock, as I wearily drag my feet along the lane by the farmer's side, I can see his daughter driving the cattle through the pasture to the cowyard, and I wonder how I shall fare at the evening milking. But I am not put to that test; for the farmer declines my offer of help, with the explanation that, under our arrangement, my day's work is done at six o'clock, and that he is not entitled to further help, nor does he need it, he adds, for his wife and daughter always lend a hand at the chores.

Supper is almost a repetition of dinner, with a pitcher of rich milk kindly pressed upon me when I decline the tea, and with apple-sauce and cake in the place of pumpkin-pie. Soon after, I am lighting my way with a lantern through the dark to my cot in the loft, and for ten hours I sleep the sleep of a child, and awake at six in the morning to the farmer's call of "John, hey John!" from under the window.

All of that day, which was Wednesday, was given to completing the work on the dam. The necessary excavation was soon finished, and then we laid the timbers, and nailed the new planks into place, and filled in and packed the earth behind them. Over the completed job the

farmer expressed such a depth of satisfaction that I felt a glow of pride in the work, and a sense of proprietorship, which was splendidly compensating for the effort which it had cost.

The remaining three days of the week we spent in picking apples. Behind the wagon-house was an orchard. Mr. Hill first selected a tree, and then we placed under it the number of empty barrels, which, in his judgment, corresponded to its yield, a judgment which was always singularly accurate. Then, each supplied with a half-bushel basket with a wooden hook attached to the handle, we next climbed among the branches, and suspending our baskets, we carefully picked the apples with a quick upward turn of the fruit, which detached them at the point at which the stem was fast to the twig. Both baskets were usually full at about the same moment, and then we took turns in climbing down and receiving the baskets from the tree, and emptying the apples into the barrels with great caution against possible bruising.

All this was Arcadian in its joyous simplicity. All day we moved among the boughs, breathing the fragrance of ripened fruit and the mellow odor of apple-trees turning at the touch of frost; picking ceaselessly the full-juiced apples "sweetened with the summer light," while above us

white clouds fled briskly before the northwest wind across the clear blue of the autumn sky; and below us lay the pasture, where the patient cattle grazed, and beyond stretched open country of field and forest, which, in that crystal air, met the horizon in a clean, sharp line.

Mr. Hill and I were growing very chummy. A faint uncomfortable distrust of me, which I suspected through the first two days, had wholly disappeared. We talked with perfect freedom now and with a growing liking for each other, which, for me, added vastly to the charm of those six days on the farm.

I tried at first to lead the talk, and to draw Mr. Hill into expressions of his views of life, that I might learn his attitude toward modern progress, and catch glimpses of the growth of things from his point of view. But Mr. Hill was proof against such promptings. He was a shrewd, practical farmer, with a masterful hold upon all the details of his enterprise, and with a mind quickened by thrifty conduct of his own affairs to a catholic taste for information. His schooling had been limited, he said, but he must have meant his actual school training; for life itself had been his school, and admirably had he improved its advantages. He was a trained observer and a close student of actual events. In-

stead of my getting him to talk, he made me talk, but with so natural a force as to rob it of all thought of compulsion.

The talk drifted early into politics, and I soon found that my light-hearted generalizations would not pass muster. Back and back he would press me upon the data of each induction, until I was forced to tell what I knew, or was confronted with my ignorance.

And then he delighted in talk of other people than our own, and his knowledge of a somewhat general contemporaneous history was curiously varied and accurate. Stories of succeeding English ministries, and even of the short-lived French cabinets, were ready to his use, and he tactfully righted me in my errors. But he held me closest to my memories of things among the common people, the agricultural laborers in England, and their relation to the farmers, and theirs in turn to the landed proprietors, and the promise which the land could give of continued support to three classes, under the changed conditions of modern life. All that I could remember of a typical laborer's home, and of its manner of life, and of the general aspect of an English farm, seemed only to whet his appetite, and to strengthen his demand for what I knew of the continental peasantry. His interest centred

strongly in the French, and there was plainly a peculiar charm for him in every detail which I could give of the French farmers, with their small holdings, and their inherited habits of thrift, and of the close culture of their lands. But he would even lead me on to speak of great cities, and of the life in them of the rich and poor, and of any signs, of which I knew, of growing social discontent. And with an interest that never flagged, he questioned me on works of art; and followed patiently, and with a zest that warmed one's own enthusiasm, through endless churches, and long dim galleries, and by narrow, crooked streets of a modern city to the ruins of its distant past. And there we restored the crumbling piles, until there stood clear to his imagination a vision of Imperial Rome, and his eyes kindled to some great general's triumph moving through the *Via Sacra*, and the people swarming to the very chimney-tops, their infants in their arms, and on the air the deep, rich moving roar of high acclaim!

Sunday was the last day of my stay on the farm. When, in the middle of the week, I found that Mr. Hill was likely to keep me, I was conscience-stricken, because I had not told him that my stay would be short. He said nothing at first in reply to my announcement,

but presently remarked that it was very hard to get men in that part of the country.

"But, surely," I said, "more men apply to you for work than you can possibly employ."

He looked at me with some wonder, at my ignorance.

"For a long time I have been looking for a man to help me," he said. "I'm growing old, and I can't do the work that I once did. If I could find the right man, I'd keep him the year round, and pay him good wages. But the best young fellows go to the cities, and the rest are mostly a worthless lot. There's hardly a day in the year when I haven't a job for any decent man who'll ask for it. I have to go looking for men, and then I generally can't find one that's any account."

This was much the longest speech that he had made to me so far, and a very interesting one I thought it, and I am only sorry that I cannot reproduce the exact phraseology, with its Anglo-Saxon words set, by an instinctive choice, into rugged sentences which admirably expressed the man. I waited hopefully for further speech from him, and at last it came, quite of its own accord; for I had given up trying to draw him out.

We were sitting together on Sunday evening

on the platform of the pump in front of the farm-house. It had been a very restful Sunday. In the morning I went to the village church, where two services followed each other in quick succession. The first was a prayer-meeting, attended by a little company of farming people and village folk, who conscientiously parted company at the door on the basis of sex, and sat on opposite sides of a central aisle.

The service was a simple one. The leader read a passage from the Bible, and offered prayer, and then gave out a hymn. When the singing ceased, one after another, the older men, with nervous pauses between, rose to "testify" or sank to their knees, and prayed aloud. I chiefly remember one as a typical figure—an old man, whose thick white hair mingled with a bushy beard that covered his face. I noticed him first in comfortable possession of a bench along which he stretched his legs. On his feet were loose carpet-slippers; and with his shoulders braced against the wall, and his head thrown back, and his eyes closed, he looked the vision of physical ease, which matched the expression of deep contentment that he wore. There was no suspicion of sleep about him. Most evidently he followed with liveliest sympathy every word that was said or sung. I looked up pres-

ently at the sound of a new voice, and found the old man on his feet. He was adding his "testimony" to what had gone before, and was speaking rapidly in a deep, gruff voice with blunt articulation. There was a strong reminder in the performance of a school-boy's "speaking his piece;" the monotonous, unnatural tone; the rapid flow of conventional, committed phrase; and the nervous tension, which communicated itself to his hearers in a fear that he might forget.

But there came at length, without calamity, the final "Pray for me that I may be kept faithful," and then he knelt in prayer. Invocations from the Prophets, and supplications from the Psalms, and glowing exhortations from the Epistles, were interwoven with strangest interpolations of his own, while his voice rose and fell in regular cadences and he audibly caught his breath between. But he was losing himself in his devotion, and presently his voice fell to a natural tone, and his words grew plain and direct, as he held converse with the Almighty about our common life—of sin and its awful guilt, of temptation and its fateful trial, of suffering and its terrible reality, of sorrow and its cruel mystery. Then, as though quickened by the touch of truth, his faith rose on surer

wings, and his prayer breathed the sense of sin forgiven, and of life made strong by a power not our own, and of hope exultant in the knowledge "of that new life when sin shall be no more!"

A solemn stillness held us when he rose, and made us feel the presence in our common lot of things divine and that deep sacredness of life which awes us most.

A short preaching service followed. The preacher drove up on the hour from another parish, and started off, at the meeting's end, for yet a third appointment.

This is a long digression from Mr. Hill's talk of the evening, and I have said nothing yet of the afternoon. We took chairs out on the grass in front of the cottage, after dinner, and sat in the shade. We soon had visitors. Mr. Hill's brother and his wife walked up from the lower farm, and a little later there came Mr. Hill's son and his young bride. The son is a physician, whose practice covers much of that country-side; and it was interesting to me to learn that his professional training was got at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York.

Fearful of disturbing the family gathering, I drew off a little, and gave my attention to a book. Late in the afternoon I was roused by the coming of another guest. He was an old

neighboring farmer out in search of a heifer which had broken through the pasture-fence. As he joined us he was speaking so swiftly and incoherently about the heifer's escape that I felt some doubt of his sanity, but he quieted down in a moment, and threw himself on the grass with the evident purpose of resting before resuming the search. He was lying flat upon his back, and his long bony fingers were clasped under his head. He wore no hat, nor coat, nor waistcoat, and a dark gingham shirt lay close to the sharp outlines of his almost fleshless body. Braces that were patched with strings passed over his lean shoulders, and were made fast to faded blue jeans, whose extremities were tucked into an old pair of cowhide boots. A long white beard rested on his breast, reaching almost to his waist. Only a thin fringe of hair remained above his ears; and over the skull the bare skin was so tightly drawn that you could almost trace the zigzagging junctures of the frontal and the cranium bones.

But skeleton as he was, he was marvellously alive. His eyes were aflame, and prone as he lay and resting, he impressed you as a man so vitalized, that with a single movement he could be upon his feet and in intense activity. He was talking on about the heifer,

nervously repeating to us, again and again, the details of where he had seen her last, and the rift which he had found in the fence, and how he had sent his hired man in one direction, and had gone in another himself.

He was a rich farmer, Mr. Hill told me afterward, and he lived alone, except for an occasional hired man whom he could induce to stay with him for a season. But even in his old age he worked on his farm with the strength and endurance of three men, laying aside, year by year, his store of gain. Without a single human tie he worked on as though spurred by every claim of affection and the highest sense of responsibility to provide for those whom he loved; and all the while a vast misanthropy grew upon him, and he would see less and less of his fellow-men, and an almost life-long scepticism hardened into downright unbelief.

So far he had not noticed me; but now he turned my way, lifting himself upon his elbow, and fixing his sunken, burning eyes on mine, while the white hairs of his beard mingled with the blades of grass.

"You're hired out to Jim, ain't ye?"

Jim was his designation of Mr. Hill.

"Yes," I said.

"What's he payin' you?"

I told him.

Mr. Hill was squirming in nervous discomfort.

"What's your name?"

I gave it him.

"Where are you come from?"

"Connecticut."

"Connecticut? That's down South, ain't it?"

"No, that's down East."

"Was you raised there?"

I do not know into what particulars of my history and of my antecedents this process might have forced me had not the heifer come to my relief. She was a beautiful creature, with a clean sorrel coat, and wide, liquid, mischievous eyes; and as she ran daintily over the turf at the side of the lane, saucily tossing her head, you knew that she was closely calculating every chance of dodging the gawky country boy who, breathing hard, lunged after her.

Without a word of parting, and as abruptly as he came, the old man was gone to head her off in the right direction at the mouth of the lane. And so he disappeared, as strange a human being as the world holds, living tremendously a life of strenuous endeavor, yet Godless and hopeless and loveless in it all, except for the

greedy love of gain, which holds him in miserable bondage, as he works his life away.

It was soon after supper that Mr. Hill and I sat down together on the platform of the pump. There was little movement in the air, and it was very mild for the twenty-seventh of September. As the stars appeared, they shone upon us through a mellow warmth, like that of summer, in which they seem magically near, and one feels their calm companionship in human things.

"And you've made up your mind to go in the morning?" Mr. Hill began.

"Yes," I said, "I must be off. I am truly sorry to go. But you surprise me by what you tell me of the difficulty in the country of getting men to work. One hears so much about 'the unemployed,' that any demand for labor, which remains unsupplied, seems to me an anomalous condition." *

"That's a big question," he said, with a deep sigh, as he leant back against the pump and looked at me out of blue eyes that were gray

* I have presented here, together with ideas advanced by Mr. Hill, others secured in fragmentary conversations with various farmers by the way. These ideas seem to me to represent a body of accordant thinking. It is fair to say that I also found among the farmers quite another school of thought. This I shall try to present later with equal fulness.

and keen in the starlight. "It reminds me of what we used to call a hard example in arithmetic in the district school when I was a boy. There's a good many things you've got to take account of, if you work it out right, and there's a good many chances of mistake, and a mistake goes hard with your answer. I haven't worked this sum and I haven't seen it worked, but I've studied it a good while, and I think I know how to do parts of it."

He paused for a moment and then went on: "In the last hundred and fifty years there have been great changes in the world in the ways of producing things—'improved methods of production' the books call it. Some say it ain't really 'improved,' only faster and cheaper, but I'm not arguing that point. The power of people to produce the necessaries of life is a big sight greater than it was a hundred and fifty years ago—that's my point. It's what the books call 'increased power of production.' And among civilized people there's been this increase of producing power in about all the forms of production. In some forms it's been very great, and in others not so great; but I guess there ain't many kinds of business that haven't been changed by it.

"Now, I think that the farming business has

lagged behind the rest. Not that there ain't been improvement, for there's been great improvement. There's the steam-ploughs, and the reapers, and harvesters, and mowers, and the threshing-machines; and then there's the science of agricultural chemistry. But I'm judging of what I know of the farming business as it's carried on.

"Now, here's my farm: it's part of a tract that my great-grandfather settled on and cleared. I've heard my grandfather tell many a time of the Indians that were all about here when he was a boy, and even my father often went hunting deer down on the lake this side of the woods.

"Well, I know this country pretty well, and I find that a farmer now don't work any bigger farm than my grandfather did, nor the work isn't much lighter, nor he doesn't get much more for it. There's been a good many changes, but as the farming business goes, there ain't any increased production that's kept up with other kinds of business when you calculate how many farmers there are and how much they do.

"I read in a book the other day that twenty-five men, with modern machinery, can produce as much cotton cloth as the whole population of Lancashire could produce in the old way; but

there ain't any twenty-five men who could work the farms of this township with all the modern farming machinery.

"Take it day in and day out the whole year round on the farms, and a man's work or a team's work is pretty much what it was a hundred years ago.

"And here's another thing that makes a great difference between farming and other kinds of business. When I go to the city I most generally visit some factory and go through it as carefully as I can. The machinery is interesting and wonderful, and if it's something useful they're making, I like to compare the productive power of the factory hands with what it would be if they were all working separately by the old methods. But besides this, there's the wonderful economy that I see. The factory is built so as to save all the carting that's possible, and there's men always studying how they can make it more convenient, and can improve the machinery and cut down the costs. And then I don't find any leakage anywhere that can be helped; and it's most wonderful what they do in some kinds of manufacturing with what you'd think was the very refuse, working it up into some by-product that makes the difference between profit and loss in the whole business. It's

close culture of the closest kind applied to manufacture.

"Sometimes I've had a chance to talk to a superintendent of a factory, and he's told me about the business from the inside—how carefully he must study the market and how closely he must calculate a hundred things; and how exactly his books must be kept, and how easy it is for a little thing that's been miscalculated or overlooked to ruin the business.

"I tell you that I've come to see pretty clearly that the business that pays in these times of competition is a powerful lucky one and powerful well managed. When the year's work is done and the wages have been paid, and the rent and the interest on the capital paid up, and the salaries paid to the brains that run the thing, it's a remarkable business that's got anything over in the way of profit.

"Now, the farming business, as I look at it, is a long way behind all that. We don't know much about close culture in farming in America, and I don't believe there's one farmer in five hundred that keeps books and can tell you exactly where he stands; and these things we've got to learn. It's terrible easy to let things go their own way pretty much—until the fences are falling down and your buildings are out of

repair, and your tools are going to ruin with rust, and your children are not having good advantages. You may think that you're too poor to afford anything different and that it's economy to live so. But it ain't; it's the worst kind of waste. It takes a sight of hard work, brain-work, and handwork, too, to get good, substantial buildings and fences, and tools and stock, and to keep them good and to raise your children well. You've got to make a close calculation on every penny, but it's the only true economy. The difference between the economy of shabbiness and the economy of thrift is the difference between waste and saving.

"My father could not give me much school learning, but he learnt me to farm it thoroughly. I've been at it a good many years now, and I know by experience the truth of what he taught me. If there's ever been anything more than our living at the end of the year, it's only because we all worked hard, my wife and daughter as hard in the house as me and my son on the farm; and because we studied to raise the best of everything we could, and to get the best prices we could, and we saved every penny that could be saved.

"My son wanted to study to be a doctor when he was growing up, and so I gave him the best

schooling that he could get around here; and when he was old enough, and I saw his mind was made up, I sent him to the best medical college I could find. And I've given my daughter all the schooling she's had the strength for. It's the best economy to get the best, whether it's buildings, or tools, or stock, or education; and there's a great deal more satisfaction in it besides. I tell you this because it's my experience, and I know it, but I owe it mainly to the raising my father gave me. It's hard work, and it's hard study, and it's awful careful economy in little things as well as big, that makes a man succeed in any business.

"You've heard the saying that 'the luxuries of one generation are the necessities of the next.' That's certainly true in the country. I've heard my grandfather say that when he was a boy it didn't take more than ten dollars a year to pay for everything that the family bought. All that they wore and ate and drank they raised on the farm, and they built their own buildings, and made their own tools, mostly, and worked out most of their taxes.

"I'm not saying that farmers must go back to that. It ain't possible. It's every way better now to buy your cloth than to make it, and so with your tools, and many other things; but

when I see a farmer's family spend in a year for clothes and feathers and finery as much as ten families did for all they bought in the old days, and at the same time their fences are falling and their stock suffering from neglect, I see that these people don't know their business. And when I see a farmer mortgage a piece of land to give his daughter a fashionable wedding, and then complain that there ain't a living to be made any more in farming, I'm sorry for him.

"You see, in the old days the ways of farming were primitive and simple, and the ways of living were primitive and simple, too, and they matched each other. Now both have changed. Farming is different, and living in the country is different. The style of living in the country is copied from the towns, where there's been the greatest increase of producing power; and I argue that the increase of producing power on the farms hasn't by any means kept up to what it is in the cities.

"Now, this difference ain't unnatural. Everybody knows that the big fortunes of the last hundred years have mostly been made in manufacture in the cities, and in the increase of land values in the cities, and in the development of railroads and mines. And where the big fortunes have been made, there's been the best chances

for brains and energy and enterprise. And where brains and energy and enterprise are at work, there all kinds of labor will go, for it's these that make employment for labor.

"Now, it ain't saying anything against farmers to say that the best brains that have been born on the farms for the last hundred years haven't stayed on the farms. The farming business hasn't had the benefit of them, but they've gone to the professions, and the business in the cities, where the most money was to be made.

"So that through all this time of 'increasing power of production' there's been a constant drain from the country of its best brains and blood, and it ain't strange that the farming business has lagged behind the others which these have gone into.

"I believe there's going to be a change. I believe the change is begun. Competition is so keen now in about all kinds of business, that the chances of making a fortune and making it quick are very few. There's about so much interest to be got for your capital, and if the security is good, the interest is very low, and there's about so much to be got for your brains, unless you've got particular rare brains; and as the competition grows keener, brains begin to see that there's about as much to be made out of

farming as out of other kinds of business. Invention has done a lot already, and when the same economy and thrift and thorough business principles are used in farming as are used in other kinds of production, the farming business will soon catch up with the others. And where the brains and enterprise and energy go, labor will soon follow; and for a time anyway, there won't be as many unemployed in the cities, nor as many farmers in the country looking for men to work. But why are there unemployed in the cities, while there is already a demand for men in the country? Why, because many of the unemployed ain't fit for us to take into our homes as hired men, and many don't know that there's such a chance for them, and many if they do know, would sooner starve in the cities than work and live on a farm. I've got an idea that when the farming business is developed, there'll be a big change in country life. Where there's plenty of brains and push and enterprise, there's likely to be excitement.

"But it's got to come naturally; you can't pump interest into country living by legislation. I had to laugh the other day when I was reading a speech that Mr. John Morley made in Manchester, I think it was. Anyway, he was arguing for parish councils, and he said that

this 'gregarious instinct' that makes country people flock into towns that are already overcrowded, is something that we ought to counteract by making country life more interesting, and he thought that parish councils would help to do that. Lord Salisbury got into him pretty well a short time after, when he said in a speech that he never had thought it was the duty of the government to provide amusement for the people, but if *he* was making a suggestion in that line, he would like to recommend the circus.

"There's another reason besides the keen competition in other kinds of business that makes me think that farming is going to be brought up to the others, and that is, that so many of the colleges are teaching scientific farming. You ain't going to see any very great result from this in a year, nor in ten years, for there's a pretty big field to work on. But when smart young fellows that are raised in the country, and other smart young fellows that see a good chance to make something at farming—when they all get a thorough training in scientific farming, and when they all get down to work, just as they would in some other highly developed form of production, you will see results. There won't be much in shiftless farming when the scientific kind pretty generally sets the pace.

"I've read a good deal, of late years, about 'organized charities' in the cities, and it certainly does seem as if charity was a good deal more sensible than it used to be. It's hard to see how there can be any kind of serious destitution in the cities that ain't got some society to relieve it. And the rich in the cities do certainly spend a powerful lot of time and work and money in keeping up these charities and amusements for the poor; but I don't see any signs that the poor love the rich any more, nor that there's any less danger but that some day they'll rise up in war against society.

"It seems to me that a good deal of all this time, and labor, and money, and a good deal more besides, might be better spent in providing that no child among the poor grows up without proper education, technical education in useful trades; especially, I think, in scientific farming.

"If the rich lived simpler and less showy, the poor wouldn't envy them as much, nor feel as bitter against society, and the money that was saved could be pretty well invested in kinds of education that would cure poverty and destitution by preventing them, and the people that would be thrown out of work by the economies of the rich might be a good deal better em-

ployed in more productive work. It seems a pity, anyway, to keep people at practically useless labor, when the brains and the money that keep them employed in that way might be used in keeping them at productive labor, and it's all the greater pity as long as there's bitter want in the world for the necessaries of life."

This, in substance, is what he said. I apologize for the injustice of the account, its vagueness in contrast with his clearness, its circumlocutions in contrast with his crisp sententiousness, its weakened renderings of his vigorous forms of native speech; but I have tried to suggest it all, and to give the sense of its manly, wholesome spirit.

Under the stars we sat talking until nearly midnight, and, quite inevitably, we launched upon the subject of religion. Mr. Hill appeared curiously apathetic, I thought, as I urged what seemed to me vital. And when, at the end, he narrowed it all to the single inquiry as to whether I believed in a real recognition in some future life among those who have loved one another here, I found myself wondering, with a feeling of disappointment, at so wide a drift from essentials, on the part of a mind which had impressed me as so natively clear and strong. I looked up in my surprise. Even in the star-

light I could see the tears, and from a single halting sentence, I got the hint of a daughter dead in early childhood, and of a sorrow too deep for human speech, and of an eager questioning of the future that was the soul's one great desire.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known," was all that I could say to him, and I went to bed pitying myself for my shallow judgment, and my ignorance of life.

CHAPTER VI

IN A LOGGING CAMP

FITZ-ADAMS'S CAMP, ENGLISH CENTRE, LYCOMING COUNTY, PA., Tuesday, October 27, 1891.

IN spite of the fast-falling rain, Fitz-Adams, the boss, ordered us up at half-past four, as usual, this morning; but when breakfast was over, the rain was too heavy to admit of our going to work. Some of the woodsmen are gone back to bed, and some are mending their clothes in the loft, and the rest of the gang are loafing in the "lobby," smoking, and playing what they call "High, low, Jack and the game," except Mike, a superb young Irishman, who, seated on a bench, with his back braced against the window-sill, is reading a worn paper copy of one of the Duchess's novels, which is the only book that I have so far seen in the camp. Jennie, the head-cook and housekeeper, has given me leave to write at one of the long tables where the gang is fed.

It is a relief sometimes to get away from the men. There may be *ennui* that is more soul-

destroying, but I have never known any that caused such evidently acute suffering as the form which seizes upon workingmen of my class in hours of enforced idleness. When the day's work is done, they take their rest as a matter of course, and enjoy it. But a day like this, which lays them off from work, and shuts them within doors, furnishes awful evidence of the poverty of their lives. Most of the men here can read, but not to one of them is reading a resource. The men at play are in blasphemous ill-temper over the cards, and are, apparently, on the brink of blows, while Mike is laboriously spelling his way through a page, and nervously squirming in an effort to find a comfortable seat. And I know, from the experience of Sundays, in what humor the men will come down to dinner from the loft, to face an afternoon of eternal length to them, which, in some way, must be lived through.

I note the contrast with their normal selves the more, because, as a body of workmen, this is much the most wholesomely happy company which I have so far fallen in with. We are about twenty in number, a curiously assorted crew, all bred to the roughest life. Far up in the mountains, miles from any settlement, we live the healthful life of a lumber camp, working

from starlight to starlight; breathing the mountain-air, keen with the frosty vigor of autumn, and fragrant of pine and hemlock; eating ravenously the plain, well-cooked food which is served to us, now in the camp and now on the mountain-side, where we sit among the newly stripped logs; sleeping deeply at night in closely crowded beds in the cabin-loft, where the wind sweeps freely from end to end through the gaping chinks between the logs, and where, on rising, we sometimes slip out of bed upon a carpeting of snow. This is the life which these men know and which half-unconsciously they love, breaking from it at times, in a passion of discontent, and spending the earnings of months in a short, wild *abandon* of debauch, but always coming back again, remorseful, ashamed to meet the faces of the other men, yet reviving as by miracle under the touch of their native life. They charm you with their freedom of spirit, and their rude sturdiness of character, until you find your heart warming to them with a real affection, and feeling for them the intimate pain of personal sorrow at sight of their cruel limitations. Away from their work, their one notion of the necessary accompaniment to leisure is money; and possessed of time and treasure, their first instinctive reach is after liquor and lust.

Even now as Fitz-Adams and his brother, in yellow oil-cloth coats and wide tarpaulins, set out through the pouring rain in an open rig for English Centre, there is a chorus of voices from the door and windows of the cabin, shouting to them to bring back whiskey and plenty of it. If they do, and the rain continues, only God knows what the camp will be to-night.

. . . . . .

It is sixty miles, I should judge, from Pleasant Hill to Williamsport, and it proved a two days' march. Although the distance covered must have been about the same on both days, the difference that they each presented in actual experience of the journey was of the kind-of contrast which a wayfarer must expect.

Monday was a faultless autumn day. The air was quick, and the roads were in good condition, and I was feeling fit, and was "passing rich" with three dollars and seventy-five cents, the wages of five days on the farm.

The region through which I walked was typical of the open country of the Middle States. Over its rolling surface was the varied arrangement of wood and field and pasture-land, with the farmers' houses and barns attesting separate possession. There were frequent brooks and narrow winding country roads; roads lined with

zigzag rail fences and loose stone walls, along which dwarfed birches grew, and elderberry bushes, and sumach, with wild grape-vines and clematis creeping on the walls; while in the coarse turf on the banks, there blossomed immortelles, and purple aster, and golden-rod.

Mr. Hill had given me clear directions. At the post-office of Irish Lane I turned sharply toward Marshall's Hollow, and passed on the way a camp-meeting ground, where deep in the shadows of a grove stood numbers of rough wooden huts; grouped in chance community, and little suggesting in the weird stillness of desertion, the sounds of revival worship, with which they are made to ring through a part of every summer. At Harveyville I turned abruptly up the hillside in the direction of Cambra. It was high noon when I reached that village, and I was but a few miles beyond it, on the way to Benton, when I stopped to get something to eat. It was the evident poverty of the house where I stopped that interested me. I knew that there was no hope of earning a meal at such a place, but I could pay for what I ate, and I was sure of being less of an annoyance there than at some well-to-do farmer's house.

The cottage was an unpainted wooden shell, and, like it, the corn-crib and pig-pen and little

barn beyond seemed tottering to a fall. Faded leaves of a woodbine, that climbed upon the cottage, were thick about the door-way, and lay strewn by the wind upon the bare floor within. There was but one room on the ground floor, and a stove and a sewing-machine and a small wooden chest were all its furniture. I knocked at the open door. Through an opposite one, communicating with a lean-to, a woman appeared. She was large and muscular, but in her face was the sickly pallor of ill-nourishment, and her hair was dishevelled, and the loose, ragged dress which she wore was covered with dark, greasy stains.

I asked for bread and milk; she explained that the family had just finished dinner, but that she could give me something, if I would wait, and she invited me to a seat on the chest.

I drew from my pack an unfinished newspaper, and as I read I could feel innumerable eyes upon me. Through the cracks in the door, and the ragged breaks in the plaster, came the inquisitive gaze of children's eyes, and I could hear their eager whispers as a swarm of children crowded one another for possession of the best peep-holes.

Their mother asked me in, and set before me, on a table littered with remnants of dinner, a

pitcher of fresh milk and some huge slices of coarse bread, a large yellow bowl, and a pewter tablespoon. The children stared at me as I ate, and I tried to form an accurate estimate of their number, but despaired when, after I thought that I had distinguished eight, I found my estimate upset by sudden apparitions of faces hitherto unrecognized. The oldest child seemed not more than twelve, and the youngest lay asleep in a cradle near the stove, where its mother could rock it as she worked. They all were as ragged and dirty as the children of the slums, but they had nothing of the vivacity of these, nor of the quick adjustment to changing circumstances which gives to children, bred upon the street, their first hold upon your interest.

Stolid and wide-eyed they stood about the room, intently watching me, moving here and there for new points of view; until their mother, who had showed no wish to talk as she washed the dishes, now broke the silence with a sounding cuff upon the ear of a little boy, as, with a loud command, she sent him sobbing into the back yard to fetch her wood.

The children scattered instantly, except a little girl with flaxen hair and grotesquely dirty face, who clung to her mother's skirts, and seemed to

hamper her immeasurably; the more so as the baby had wakened in the noise, and had begun to cry. I grew sick with fear of what was coming next, but the mother's mood had changed; for catching the crying baby in her arms, she almost smothered it with kisses, and sitting down she fondled it, and gently stroked the head of the child beside her.

It was a veritable country slum, with nearly all the barren squalor of a crowded tenement. You thought of life in it as some hard necessity, from which all choice and spontaneity are gone. And so in great part it must have been, and the wonder was the stronger at sight of the instinct of mother love, springing like a living fountain in an arid plain.

The village of Benton wore a preoccupied air when I entered it. I soon found the cause in an auction sale of horses in the stable-yard of the tavern. The horses huddled close, as if for common protection, in an angle formed by the buildings. They were watched by a mounted rider, whose duty it was to prevent any from breaking loose. A small crowd of farmers and village men, all of them coatless and in their working clothes, formed a semicircle about the animals. The surrounding doors and windows were full of women's faces, alive with interest in

the progress of events; and children perched upon the fences, or dodged in and out among the groups of men. A fat and ruddy auctioneer walked back and forth excitedly before the crowd, loudly repeating a call for bids; or having caught one, running it rapidly through changes of inflection and intonation, until a fresh bid started him anew on his flight of varying tones, which ended at last in the dying cadences of "Going! going! gone!"

Presently I found a man who was so far unoccupied by the sale as to have leisure to direct me on my way. Taking his advice I started for Union Church and Unityville. In the outskirts of Benton, as I left the village, an urchin sat upon the door-step of a cottage, idly beating about him with a stick, consoling himself apparently as best he could for not having been allowed to go to the sale. The sight of a tramp with a pack upon his back diverted him; and far as the sound could carry there came following me, as I climbed the hill beyond the village, his shouts of "Git there, Eli!"

The contrast with Monday's march appeared at once on Tuesday morning. The clouds which were threatening when I made an early start grew more threatening while I walked on, and they broke in torrents of rain as I entered

Lairdsville, with Williamsport still twenty-four miles away.

A tavern gave me shelter, but presently the rain slackened and I made up my mind to push on to Williamsport in spite of the storm, for my letters were there; and once on the road with your mail definitely in view, you grow highly impatient of delays.

An hour's rain had worked great changes in the roads. Hard and dusty when I set out in the early morning, they were quagmires now and were running with muddy streams. The rain pelted my face and dripped through my ragged hat, and trickled down my back and washed into my boots. I was a dangerous-looking vagrant when I reached Hughesville at noon. I walked rapidly through the village street in some fear of arrest, but the storm had passed, and I soon learned the road to Williamsport by way of Hall's Landing.

Splashing wearily along the heavy roads with that awful load chafing my back, I knew vaguely that I was passing through an exceedingly rich and beautiful farming region, but my interest was all in the surest footing to be found, and it was with glad relief that late in the afternoon I stepped upon the solid pavements of the town.

I had been told, on the road, of a laborer's

cottage in Church Street where cheap board and lodging could be had. From the post-office I readily found my way to this cottage, and was soon propped up in bed reading my letters, while the laborer's wife hung up my clothes to dry in the kitchen and put my boots under the stove.

In the morning all the brilliance of the clear, cold autumn had returned. It was such a day as seems to emerge renewed with fresh and ample vigor from the cleansing of a storm.

The streets presented a really singular picture. The town itself is the conventional American, provincial, manufacturing centre, with its business portion built up in "brick blocks," which are innocent of any attraction but utility. From this quarter it shades gradually, in one direction, into the workshops and cottages of the region of the proletariat, and in another into the wide, well-shaded avenues where are the somewhat ostentatious homes and churches of the well-to-do.

Long lines of booths now crowded the curves about the central public square and reached far down the communicating streets. In these booths the farming people of the surrounding country sold their fruits and garden vegetables, and butter and eggs and poultry; and white-

aproned butchers spread their meats in tempting array. It was an Oriental bazaar in all but color and the highly pitched jabber of Eastern bargaining. But still more perfect as a reproduction of foreign scenes were the groups of women who, with colored shawls tied round their heads and falling about their shoulders, sat on the steps of public buildings with baskets of provisions about them and talked among themselves, and came to terms with customers in their oddly mixed vernacular.

It recalled at once the Platz of a German city thronged by peasant women on market days, only here, too, was a lack of color. The women were unmistakably Teutonic. All had the generous contour of countenance which approaches to a family likeness in a whole race of peasantry, but the red of the old country complexion had faded to our prevailing pallor.

In spite of a large foreign element, or in virtue of it, I do not know which, the town itself is aggressively American. The fact that some hundreds of million feet of lumber come each year from its mills gives to it great importance as a lumber centre. And the good fortune of this form of industry the city certainly shows in its freedom from the usual begriming effects of manufacture on a large scale.

In one of the morning papers of the town I found the spirit of the place expressed in a reported speech of a local celebrity, an ex-member of Congress. The chief burden of it was the note of congratulation to the people of the town on their progress and prosperity, as indicated in their electric lights and rapid transit system, and in their growing industries and increasing numbers, which, he declared, "had passed the stopping-point."

But I must hurry on. Early on Friday afternoon, October 9th, I set out from Williamsport, with Oil City as my next objective point. I had no money, but this did not disturb me, for I was entering the open country and felt sure of finding work. The road lay along the fertile river bottom and then began to climb the range of hills which walls in the valley on the north. The lasting impression here is of a region of most uncommon natural wealth. Many square miles of farms come into the range of vision; the soil looks like a deep, rich loam. And a like impression comes to you from the opposite bank of the river, where the land lies flat to the foot of the southern range of hills.

From such a vantage ground you see at a glance how the river, shut in by these barriers, could have risen to so great a height in the

flood of 1889 and have worked such appalling disaster.

There are constant references to "the flood" among the inhabitants of the valley, and it plainly holds for them the place of a chronological mark not unlike that held farther East by the "blizzard" of 1888, only it sounds not a little odd at first to hear common reference to antediluvian events.

Presently I came to a road which forked at Linden to the right, and made in the direction of a gap in the hills. Its general course seemed westward, and so I followed it. An hour or two later it had led me into a forest, where the sunlight was fast fading. I was intent on the question of finding work before nightfall, when I heard the rumble of wheels behind me, and a voice singing a German song.

I looked up as the wagon came alongside. The horses were walking slowly up the hill, and a young man lounged at leisure on the seat. His legs were crossed, and the reins lay loosely in one hand. A light, wide-brimmed felt hat was pushed back on his crown, and from under the rim the yellow hair rested on his forehead. He was singing from sheer lightness of heart; and young and strong and handsome as he was, he made you think of Alvary in his part of *Siegfried*.

"Have a ride?" he called to me, and there was no trace of foreign accent in his speech.

"Thank you," I said; and in another moment my pack was in the bottom of the wagon and I on the seat beside the driver.

"Where are you going?"

"I'm looking for a job."

"You want work on a farm?"

"Yes, that or any other kind of work that I can get."

"Well, there ain't much doing on the farms now. I don't know nobody that's looking for a hired man. There's Abe Potter, I heard him say as how he wanted to hire a man to work for him all winter; but Miss' Potter, she told my wife last night that he'd got Jim Hale's boy, Al, to live out to him. Say, did you ever work in the woods?"

"No."

"Well, there's plenty of work in the woods. It's a rough life, but it ain't so bad when you're used to it. I worked in the woods before I was married. I could go out to the woods now, and earn two dollars a day and my keep; but my wife wouldn't let me. And it's a pretty rough life, only I come to like it. But I've got my farm now, and my wife and children; and her old folks lives with us, and I've got to stay to

home, and take care of things. Say, where are you going to-night?"

"I don't know. I'll try to find some place to stay where I can help with the work to pay for my keep; and then to-morrow I'll go to the woods, and try to get a job."

"I tell you, stranger, you stay at my house to-night, and in the morning you can go to English Centre. I guess you'll get a job on one of the camps."

My thanks could have expressed but little of the gratitude I felt. I shared his light-hearted mood at once, and was a very interested and attentive listener to the narrative of his early life; his disagreements with his father, and how he had inherited the farm from him burdened with debt, but had almost paid the mortgages, and had his eye now upon a neighbor's farm with a view to purchasing that.

He was singing again as we drove up the lane toward his home, and was plainly expectant. The cause was clear when two children, a girl and boy of about six and four, came running toward the wagon, with excited cries of welcome. They drew up sharply at sight of a stranger, and their father loudly greeted them with a medley of affectionate diminutives in English and German, until they lost their fear,

and began to talk rapidly with him in the quaintest German, which sounded as though it might be one with the strange dialects which you see in *Fliegende Blätter*.

I helped to unhitch the horses, and then asked whether there was more that I could do. There were apples to be picked up from under the trees in the orchard, and I worked at this task until dark, when there came the call to supper.

After that meal the children were put to bed, and the rest of us gathered in the kitchen, where a large open fire burned, and an oil-lamp lent its light. An "apple-butter making" was to be the feature of the next day's work, and we spent the evening in getting ready for it.

We sat in a semicircle in front of the fire, first the farmer's wife, and then the patriarchal grandfather, who was almost deaf, and was known to all the household by the not euphonious name of "Gross-pap," and next to him the grandmother, and last the guest. The farmer himself sat at a table near us, briskly working an apple-peeler, while the rest of us removed the cores, and cut the apples into small sections.

It was a very comfortable place which I seemed to have found in the household. I was

taken in with natural hospitality, and the family life moved on unhampered by my presence, while I, a welcome guest, could sit and watch it at my ease.

The old man had every excuse for silence, and he and his wife spoke rarely, and always in their native tongue, but they evidently understood English perfectly. The farmer and his wife spoke English to each other, and spoke it as though born to its use, but they used that quaint German dialect in talking with the old people and the children.

The wife was a plain woman, inclined to fretfulness, I thought, and she had a certain air with her husband, which is not uncommon to plain women whose husbands are distinctly handsome. She had little to say, but she listened attentively to the farmer's talk.

He was entertainment for us all. Good-looking, high-spirited, manly fellow—in perfect unconsciousness of self, he talked on with the genial freedom of a true man of the world.

His trip to Williamsport was a fruitful theme, and no least event of the journey was without its interest. He told us of the neighbors whom he met on the road, and all of his conjectures regarding their probable errands. He had taken a load of vegetables to town, and now recounted

every sale and purchase, for he had been charged with many commissions. One was the purchase of braid for his wife's new dress. He was full of good-humor at each fresh departure in his tale; but, for some reason, the story of this last commission pleased him most. With high regard for circumstantial detail, he told it to us at least five times, and ended every narrative with a beaming smile, and the unvarying remark that "I'd have got it wider if I'd only known," to which his wife replied each time with unfaltering insistence upon the last word: "But you might have known."

In the morning he was as cheerful as on the night before, and he put me in high spirits as, with many good wishes for my success, he told me again how sure he was that I could find work in the woods.

At Salladasburg I stopped for further directions about the way to English Centre; and the tavern-keeper, at whose door I inquired, confirmed me strongly in my expectation of ready employment.

An old plank road lead me through a mountain-pass, and along the course of a stream, far into the interior. The earlier miles of the march were among mountains that had long been stripped of all valuable timber, and that now

stood ragged and uncouth in their new growths, and in the blackened remnants of forest fires.

Here there were a few scattered farms; stony and of thin soil, where, for fences, uptorn stumps of trees had been placed side by side, with their twisted roots so interwoven as to form an impenetrable barrier.

A caravan of gypsies met and passed me; but except for these, the road was almost deserted, and seemed to be leading into yet lonelier regions.

Mountains now succeeded, on which the forests were untouched, and which, in autumn colors, were like huge mounds of foliage plant, so richly did the gorgeous hues of the maple-trees and chestnuts and beeches blend with the dark greens of hemlock and pine.

At a little after noon I came quite suddenly upon an iron bridge that crossed the wide bed of a mountain-stream, which was little more than a brook now, but gave evidence of rising, at times, to the volume and strength of a torrent. A large tavern stood near the bridge, and beyond it, to the right, was a huge tannery which plainly provided the chief industry of the place. The village street was lined with rows of wooden cottages, each an unpainted duplicate of its neighbor, and all eloquent, I thought, of the monotony of the life which they held.

I went at once to the post-office, and there learned that my journey was by no means at an end; for the lumber camps were yet some miles farther in the mountains. The camp of "Wolf Run" was mentioned as an important one, where work was plenty, and I set out at once for that.

I was tired and not a little hungry; for this mountain-air acts always as a whet upon your appetite, and I had eaten nothing since the early morning, and had already walked some fifteen miles. But the camp road, although rough, was easy to follow, and I found much satisfaction in dramatizing my approach to some short-handed employer, who would take me on at once. I dwelt longingly on supper and a restful night and Sunday in the camp, and thought hopefully of the work to be begun on Monday morning.

And then there was a peculiar interest in meeting lumbermen on the way. Some were teamsters, who sat high in air on top of immense loads of bark, which they were carting to the tannery. Many of these wore wide sombreros, and jackets made of blanket stuff in gay plaids. Others were on foot, small companies of four and five together, walking to the village, for it was Saturday afternoon.

I was prepared for some degree of roughness

in a lumber camp, and in the woodsmen themselves, but there was something in the appearance of these men whom I met that hinted at my not having guessed all the truth. I judged of roughness by what I knew of the gang at West Point, and in the sewer ditch at the Asylum, but here was something of a widely different kind from the hardness of broken-spirited, time-serving laborers. Instinctively you knew these men for men; and I respectfully kept silence, and looked to them for greeting, and got none.

When you, a total stranger, try to meet the questioning gaze of five strong men at once, all of them sturdy and lean, and deeply lined in face and keen of eye, there is bred in you a vague unease, not of fear, but an answering to that wonder as to what you are and what you are doing there. I was conscious then only of the disturbing of my earlier confidence in entering the woods. I could not analyze the look which met me, but now I know it for meaning, reft of its strongest words, "Who in —— are you? Gospel sharks we know, and camp cooks, and honest Jew pedlers who get our wages from us for their brass-gold watches and glass jewels, but such a ——! ——! ——! ——! ——! ——! as you, we never saw before."

It was about the middle of the afternoon when

a turn in the mountain-road brought to view a cluster of log-cabins, which I knew to be the camp of Wolf Run. The cabins were splendid buildings of their kind. The logs were clean and fresh and were securely fitted, while the chinks were well plastered with mud, and the roofs tightly shingled, and the gables closely boarded-up.

No one was in sight from where I stood; but there issued, from one of the smaller cabins, the ring of a blacksmith's hammer, and I found a group of men about the cabin-door.

The camp stood in a little clearing on the mountain; and in contrast with the shadowy gloom in the forest around it, the sunlight flooded this open rift with concentrated light. The chestnut-trees on the edge of the wood shone like burnished gold, and the maple leaves, still green, nearest to the trees, and but lightly touched with red along the boughs, deepened gradually, until, in the full sunlight, they blazed in crimson splendor. It was still with the stillness of autumn, and the sound of the blacksmith's stroke and the answering ring of the anvil were echoed far into the forest, where you could hear, fretting down its stony bed, a mountain-stream, which, in the speech of the lumbermen, is called a "run."

I had slipped the pack from my back, and carrying it in my hand I went up to a group of men. One of them stood leaning against the door-post. He was very tall and straight, and under his wide sombrero, the upper forehead was white and smooth as a girl's. The brows were arched above dark-brown eyes, and his nose was straight and sharply chiselled; the cheeks were lean and ruddy brown; and under a light mustache was a clean-cut, shapely mouth that answered in strength to a well-rounded, slightly protruding chin. His hands were thrust into the side-pockets of a bright blanket jacket, and his dark trousers were tucked into a pair of top-boots, that were laced over the insteps and up the outer sides of the legs.

All the men were eying me with that disturbing look; even the blacksmith had quit his work and joined them. In the questioning silence I summoned what courage I had, and walked up to young Achilles at the cabin-door, and thus addressed him:

"Is this the camp of Wolf Run?"

"Yes."

"Is Mr. Benton here?" [Benton is my version of the superintendent's name.]

"No, he's in English Centre."

"Is the camp boss here?" [That was a rash plunge on my part, but it was successful.]

"Yes, that's him," and Achilles' head nodded slightly in the direction of the largest cabin. From the door nearest us there stepped an elderly man of massive frame, bent slightly forward, and with arms so long that the hands seemed to reach to his knees. He was dressed in an old suit of dark material—a long-tailed coat that fitted very loosely, and baggy trousers —and a soiled linen shirt and collar, and a black ribbon necktie. His face was very set and stern, not with an expression of unkindness, simply the face of a man to whom life is a serious matter, and who means business all the time.

He was evidently absorbed, and, carrying an iron bar, he was about to enter the forge with no least notice of any of us, when I interrupted him.

"I beg your pardon, sir, I understand that you are the boss."

He stood still, and looked down upon me out of keen black eyes from under shaggy brows that bristled with coarse hairs; and in the deepening silence, I wondered what I should say next.

"I'm looking for a job, and I heard in English Centre that men were wanted here."

"Have you ever worked in the woods?"

"No."

"Then you'll not get work in the woods this side of hell."

He moved on at once, and the blacksmith followed him into the shop. I was left standing in the midst of the other men, who had listened intently, and were now soberly enjoying the quality of that *bon mot*, and were eyeing me in leisurely curiosity.

Again I appealed to Achilles:

"Is there another camp near here?"

"There's Long's Camp, a quarter of a mile up the run," and a slight inclination of his head indicated the way.

Mr. Long did not want me, and knew of no one who might, if I was not wanted at Wolf Run, unless, on second thought, I could get a job at Fitz-Adams's Camp.

"And where is that?" I asked.

"You remember a road which forked to the left about two mile back as you came up from English Centre?"

"Yes."

"Well, you follow that road about two mile and a half, and you'll come to Fitz-Adams's Camp."

The road was the roughest that I had so far

travelled. It cut its way along the sheer side of the mountain, following the course of the run. Presently I came to a small log cabin, where, in a little yard beside it, a cow was munching straw, and in front, a fat sow wallowed in a pool in the middle of the road. An old Irishman, who sat on the door-step, told me that I was not half a mile from the camp.

There was a stout log dam on the run a little farther up, but the gates were open and only a slender stream flowed through the muddy bottom, for the dam was undergoing repairs. Near by was a cabin large enough for a score of lumbermen.

The sun had sunk behind the mountain a good half hour before; not even the trees on the summits were lighted up with its setting rays, and the still, clear air bit you with a sudden chill. All the confidence which I had felt in the morning was gone; it was a very tired and hungry, a sobered and a chastened proletaire, that at length caught sight, in the gloom, of Fitz-Adams's Camp.

It stood in a clearing like the camp of Wolf's Run. On the highest area was a long, stout log cabin, to which there was given an added air of security by an earth embankment, which sloped from the ground to the lower logs all around the

building, as a means of preventing the air from sweeping under the floors. A door was in the end of the cabin nearest me, and a window was cut in the boarded gable above. A wooden block served as a step to the door, and near this a grindstone swung in its frame. On the outer walls of the cabin were tacked some half dozen advertisements on tin, bidding you, in black letters on an orange background, "Chew——Cut." Over a rough bridge that crossed the run near the cabin, I could faintly see one or two other smaller buildings like it, which proved to be the blacksmith's shop, and the stable for the teamsters' horses. The mountain-road continued its course past the main cabin, and disappeared among the trees in the gorge. So narrow was the ravine, that the mountain rose abruptly from one side of the cabin, and in much the same manner from the bank of the run on the opposite side, leaving a valley scarcely thirty yards in width. The larger timber had been cut away, but the mountain-sides, all about the clearing and the road, were dense with poplar, and white-barked birch and chestnut, and the younger growths of evergreen.

There was perfect quiet in the camp; not a living thing was to be seen or heard. I went up to the nearest door, and knocked. There was no

answer. I knocked again, and still there was no answer. At the side, far to the rear, I found another door, and knocked there. It opened instantly, and in the twilight I could faintly see a young woman in a dark print dress.

"Is this Fitz-Adams's Camp?"

"Yes."

"Is Mr. Fitz-Adams here?"

And then in louder voice over her shoulder into the darkness behind her:

"Say, Jim, here's a man that wants you."

There was the sound of heavy footsteps upon the wooden floor, and in another moment Fitz-Adams stood framed in the door-way.

I was standing on the ground, quite two feet below, and looking up at him in that uncertain light, he seemed to me gigantic. A great muscular frame fairly filled the door. He was dressed in a suit of light-gray corduroy, a flannel shirt, a dark felt hat, and top-boots, and I could see that he was young and not unhandsome, although of a very different type of good looks from those of Achilles. His large, round head rested close upon a trunk that was massive yet quite splendidly shapely, and highly suggestive of agility and strength. His face was round, and the features full and of uncertain moulding, but you did not miss the evidence of strength in

his thick, firm lips and the clear, unfaltering eyes with their expression of perfect unconsciousness of self. He was plainly Irish, but quite as plainly of American birth, which was clear when he spoke.

"I'm looking for a job," I began, "and I've come to see whether I can get one here."

"Who sent you?"

"They told me in Long's Camp that I might get a job here."

"They didn't want you, and so they sent you to me, eh?"

"They said that they didn't need more men there."

"Oh, they did, did they? And you've worked in the woods before, I suppose?"

"No, but I have worked at other kinds of work, and if you'll give me a chance you can see what I can do, and then you can discharge me if you don't want me."

"Well, there's lots of work in this camp, Buddy. I don't guess from the cut of you and the way you talk, that you know much about it. But you can stay, and I'll see what's in you on Monday. Look lively now, and split some of that wood, and build a fire in the lobby."

A pile of dry wood which had been sawed into lengths of two feet, lay near the kitchen-

door. On top of the pile was an axe; and as quickly as I could, I split up an armful, and carried it around to the front of the cabin and into the lobby. Near the centre of this room, which is the loafing-place for the men, was an iron stove long enough to admit the sticks which I had cut. It was the work of a minute to arrange some chips in the bottom of the stove, and to pile the wood loosely on top of these. I was about to touch a match to the finer stuff, when Fitz-Adams appeared with a tin can in his hand. He bent over the stove, and opening the door wide, he tossed in the contents of the can, and the room was instantly full of a strong odor of kerosene.

In another moment the fire was blazing like mad, and roaring up the stove-pipe, and fast turning the old cracked stove red hot, but Fitz-Adams stood by in perfect unconcern, and presently departed in the direction of the kitchen.

I began to look about me in the light that shone through the gleaming cracks. Swift shadows were chasing one another over the walls and ceiling, and I soon grew familiar with a room about twelve feet deep, and which extended the width of the cabin. The floor was bare, and was very damp with the Saturday's scrubbing, as were also the benches which

reached all round the walls. Besides the stove, the only piece of furniture that the room contained was a heavy table, about four feet square, which stood close to the benches in one corner, and directly under the single window of the room, which was a small opening in the logs, fitted with four panes of glass. A rough wooden staircase led from the near corner through an opening in the ceiling to the loft; and a door was cut through the thin board partition which separates the lobby from the large room in the body of the cabin, where the men are fed, and where I am writing now. The logs that formed the outer walls of the room had been rough-hewn to a plane; and along these walls, on two sides of the room, was a line of nails, on which hung coats and hats and flannel shirts and overalls. On the partition-wall there was nailed a small mirror with a little shelf below, on which lay a comb. Near this were three wooden rollers, and over them as many towels, large and coarse and fresh from the wash.

I found a dry spot on the bench near the stove, and shoving my pack under me, I sat down, facing the outer door, and awaited developments.

It had grown quite dark without. The young woman who met me at the kitchen-door now

came in with a small oil-lamp, which she placed on the shelf near the mirror. I began to think that the men must all have left the camp for Sunday, and my spirits rose at the thought of an easy initiation into camp life. But I was soon roused from this revery by the sound of many footsteps approaching the cabin, and the deep, gruff voices of men.

The wooden latch lifted, the heavy door swung open, and there came trooping in a crew of fifteen lumbermen, all dripping water from their hair and faces and hands, for they were fresh from the evening wash in the run. They went first to the towels, and then formed in line for their turns at the mirror, where the comb was passed from hand to hand.

Fifteen pairs of wet, blinking eyes were fixed on me, and I was obliged to meet each searching gaze in turn. But when this ordeal was passed, I began to feel a little at my ease, for the men ignored me completely. The air with which they turned away from the inspection seemed to say: "There is something exceedingly irregular in there being in the camp so abnormal a specimen as this, but the way in which to treat the case, at least for the present, is to let it alone." It was precisely the manner of well-bred men toward, let us say, some inharmonious figure in their club,

whose presence is for the moment unaccounted for.

As they finished their preparation for supper, the men crowded about the stove to warm their hands, chilled by the cold ablution. Chiefly they talked shop about the day's work, but in terms that were often unintelligible to me, and the sentences were surcharged with oaths. I watched them with deep personal interest, and pictured myself in line, and wondered whether I should ever be so fortunate as to find a clean, dry section on a towel, or come early to the much-used comb.

The last man had barely completed his toilet when the door in the partition opened, and a woman's voice announced supper. Instantly there was loud shuffling of heavy boots on the bare floor, and a momentary press about the door, and then we were soon seated at one of the two long tables in the mess-room of the cabin, and there arose a clatter of hungry men feeding, and the hubbub of their talk.

The meal was excellent. Its chief dish was corned beef and cabbage, and there were boiled potatoes and boiled beans besides, with abundance of home-made white bread, and strong hot tea.

My seat was last in the row on one side of the

table. The end seat was unoccupied, and my nearest neighbor ignored me; I was free to satisfy a well-developed appetite, and grow more familiar with my surroundings.

First of all I ate a very hearty supper. The food was admirably cooked, and was served with a high degree of cleanness. The oil-cloth, of marble design, which covered the table was spotless, and the rude, coarse service, befitting a camp, had all been thoroughly washed. It is true that the men were without their coats, most of them with their waistcoats off, but these are men whose work is of the cleanest, and there was nothing in all the setting of the supper to mar a healthy appetite; there was much, I thought, that really heightened the pleasure of eating.

The conversation ran on as it had begun in the lobby. There was much talk about the progress of the work, and gossip about neighboring camps, and proposals for the disposing of Sunday; and it struck me with swift terror that the presence of the three young women, who waited on the table, was no least check to profanity. The talk never rose to the pitch of excitement, it was the mere give and take of ordinary conversation, and yet there mingled in it the blackest oaths. With a curse of eternal

perdition upon his lips, a man would speak to his neighbor of some casual incident of the day, and would end his sentence with a volley of nameless insults and hideous blasphemies. This was their common language. With no realization of what they did, they flung eternal curses and foul insults at one another in lightest banter.

Half an hour later we had all returned to the lobby. The teamsters lit their lanterns, and went to care for the horses. Some of the men went up into the loft. Four had soon started a game of cards at the table, while most of the others filled the bench near the stove, or drew empty beer-kegs and old soap-boxes from their hiding, and completed the circle around the fire. Everyone was smoking, and all seemed highly content.

I was crowded in between a lank young fellow with dark hair and eyes, and a long, lean nose, who was swearing comfortably at a gawky youth across the stove, and an older man, of heavier build, who had fine black eyes and a black mustache, a very pale complexion, and long black hair that lay in pasty ringlets about his face and on his neck.

Soon I came to know these two as "Long-nosed Harry" and "Fred the Barber." I should explain at once that the camps have a curious

nomenclature of their own. As among other workingmen whom I have known, so here, only a man's Christian name is used, but it is nearly always accompanied with an explanatory phrase. A new-comer in the camp is called "Buddy" until his name is learned, and some appropriate epithet is found, or until a nickname springs complete from the mysterious source of those appellatives.

I knew that Fred the Barber was making ready to speak to me, and I was on my guard, when, while the talk was running high, I heard a voice close to my ear:

"Say, Buddy, you ain't a pedler, are you?"

"No."

"I thought you warn't." And Fred the Barber settled farther down upon his seat, and folded his arms, and puffed in silence on his pipe, with the air of a man who finds deep satisfaction in his own sagacity. Soon he returned to the cross-examination.

"Say, Buddy, are you going to work in the woods?"

"Yes, the boss took me on this evening."

"Ain't you never worked in the woods before?" His pipe was out of his mouth now, and his eyes shone with a livelier interest.

"No."

"How's that?"

"Why, I'm working my way out West, and my money gave out in Williamsport; and when I went looking for a job, I was told that I could get work in the woods. So I came up here."

"Well, you ain't struck a soft snap, Buddy. Jim the Boss is a square man, but he can beat the devil at work, and he don't go easy on a new hand. This is my tenth season in the woods, and I earn two dollars a day right along; but I'm going to quit, it's too rough."

There was a sudden commotion just then, for the outer door had opened to the touch of a young woodsman, who, standing sharply defined against the black night, regarded the company with a radiant smile. He was the finest specimen of them all; not much over twenty, I should say, and grown to a good six feet of height, and as straight as the trees among which he worked. Through the covering of rough clothes you felt with delight the curves of his splendid figure, and the sinewy muscles in symmetrical development. And then the lines of his throat and neck were so clean and strong, and his face charmed you with its fresh beauty, and its expression of frank joyousness. No wonder that he was a favorite in the camp. The men were rising from their seats, and the air was full of

THE MEN WERE RISING FROM THEIR SEATS, AND THE AIR WAS FULL OF WELCOME.

welcome, while he stood there for a moment, his teeth gleaming as he smiled, and his eyes shining with delight.

There rose a tumult of loud voices:

"I'm eternally lost, if it ain't Dick the Kid!" "Dickie, me boy, you God-forsaken whelp, are ye drunk?" "You ain't spent it all in two days, have you, Dick?" "Shut that lost door, and sit down by this condemned fire, you ill-begotten cur, and eternal torment be your lot!" "Tell us what hellish thing brings you here, you blessed boy, and why—ripe for endless misery as you are—why ain't you in Williamsport?"

The smile did not fade from Dick's face, as with easy deliberation he took a seat on a beer-keg and looked at the crew with answering affection in his eyes.

"I'm forever lost if I've been to Williamsport," he began. "And I ain't drunk a drop, you perjured hell-hounds of shameless begetting. I've got all my reprobate stuff with me except the two God-condemned dollars that it's cost me to live at the Temperance House in English Centre, where you can get for a quarter the best meal that any of you unveracious ones, you food for unquenchable fire, ever ate."

God help us! it was like that, only a great deal worse, until the blessed stillness of the night fell upon the camp.

For an hour or more Dick the Kid sat talking to the other men. A stranger in English Centre had fired his ambition for the lumber-camps in the mountains somewhere in West Virginia, and Dick was freely imparting his plans—how he meant to beat his way to Harrisburg and then to Pittsburg, and so on to his destination, hoarding, the while, his savings of about sixty-five dollars, as capital to launch him in a new enterprise, where he was sure that more money could be made than here.

The men listened in rapt attention, knowing perfectly that Williamsport was the destined end of Dick's journey, and that the dram-shops there and brothels would get every dollar to the last; yet charmed by his fresh enthusiasm, which touched a hidden memory, or gave momentary flight to some new-fledged hope that fluttered in their breasts. He was so young and strong and handsome, so full of life, so rich in native gifts that win and hold affection with no thought of effort! One knew it from the clear, keen joyance of the man, and the power which he had to hold the others, and to draw out their hardy sympathy. I could endure the sight no longer;

I went out to the mountain-road, and waited where I thought that Dick would pass.

He was startled when I stopped him, and instinctively he clenched his fists. For a moment I had a vivid sense of my physical insignificance, as I realized how easily, with a single blow, he could smash in my countenance and make swift end of me.

"I'm a new man in the camp," I began. "The boss took me on this evening. I was interested in what you said about going to West Virginia, and I wanted to ask you more about it. Have you ever been there?"

"No."

"You are sure that there's a good chance for a man there?"

"It's all straight, Buddy, if that's what you mean."

I told him frankly what I meant, but he was still on his guard, and presently he broke in abruptly with

"Say, Buddy, you're a sky-pilot, ain't you?"

We walked on together for a mile or more, and Dick grew friendly, and I lost my heart to him completely. Only once Dick warmed a little at a question from me. Perhaps I had no right to ask it upon so slight an acquaintance; but as there was little prospect of my ever see-

ing him again, I asked him if he felt no sense of wrong in using lightly the name of the Almighty.

I can see him now as he stood against the blackness of the forest under the clear, still stars, and answered me, with protest in his eyes and in his voice:

"By the Eternal, Buddy, I ain't swore for a month! May the Infinite consign me to the tortures of all fiends, if I've swore for a month! That? Oh, that ain't nothing; that's the way that us fellows talks. If you live in the camp long enough, Buddy, you'll hear a man swear."

His face was even more attractive in its expression of manly seriousness when we stood on the roadside at parting, and he put a firm hand on my shoulder, and fixed clear eyes on mine, as he told me, in his frank, open way, that he wanted to make a man of himself and not be a drunken sot, and that, in this new venture before him, he would honestly try, and would ask for help.

The men were going to bed when I got back to camp. I took my pack and followed them into the loft, where I found three long rows of beds, reaching nearly the length of the cabin. At my knock the boss came out of his room, which is a lightly boarded-in corner of the loft,

and gave me a bed next to that occupied by "Old Man Toler."

I had noticed Old Man Toler in the lobby as being markedly older than most of the others. He was about fifty-five, I thought, of slender, slightly stooping figure, and with gray hair. What had impressed me was his exceedingly intelligent and agreeable face, and I had wondered at sight of him as being apparently an ordinary hand in the crew. He gave me a friendly greeting when the boss consigned me to his care, and then resumed his conversation with a neighbor, while I made ready for bed.

The beds are simple arrangements, admirably suited to the ends which they serve. A mattress and a bolster stuffed with straw lie upon a rough wooden frame without springs, and on top of these are four or five thicknesses of coarse blankets and tow "comforters." The men creep under as many strata of bed-clothing as their individual tastes prompt in a given temperature. And the temperature varies in the loft in nearly exact conformity with its variations out of doors, for the boards in the gables have sprung apart, and there are rifts even between the logs, and the winds sweep with much freedom from end to end of our large bedroom.

I soon became interested, too, in the varying

tastes of the men in the manner of their dress for bed. Some go so far on warmer nights as to take off their boots and trousers, and even their coats and waistcoats. Others stop at their boots and coats; and on the coolest nights not a few go top-coated and booted to bed, and make a complete toilet in the morning by putting on their hats.

There was more than one surprise for me that night, in the considerate, well-bred manners of the men; and the whole experience of my stay in camp has only served to deepen my appreciation. Young Arthur met, at Rugby, the fate which a merely casual acquaintance with Sunday-school literature would lead one to imagine as being unfailingly in store for those who prefer to maintain their private habits in the company of unsympathetic associates. It will be remembered that Arthur became, while kneeling at his bedside on the evening of his first day at school, a target for boots and unkind remarks, until Tom Brown interfered. Schools have improved since those days, and it has been gratifying to observe that a like improvement has spread among workingmen, even so far as to embrace the lumber-camps. The momentary expectation of a boot in violent contact with one's head is not a devotion-fostering emotion, and it

was a distinct relief to find no least objection offered to a course of conduct however out of keeping with the customs of the place.

There was another surprise in the comfort and the wholesome cleanliness of my bed, notwithstanding its roughness. But in spite of physical ease, I lay awake until after midnight, and when I slept at last, troubled dreams pursued me; I awoke unrested, feeling sick at heart, and little inclined to further acquaintance with a lumber amp.

But the morning brought a glorious day, clear and much warmer than Saturday; and after a late breakfast (seven o'clock) I took a book into the forest, found a comfortable seat, and read until nightfall, with time enough for dinner taken out.

The men scattered widely soon after breakfast. Many visited neighboring camps, or went shooting; some walked to English Centre; but it was a perfectly sober crew that reassembled at the supper-table, and a much cleaner-looking set than on the night before; for after breakfast, for two hours or more, Fred the Barber had thriftily plied his trade.

We all went early to bed. The men hailed the day's end as bringing welcome relief in release from intolerable restraint. When it grew

too dark to read, and I had returned to the cabin, I found in the lobby several of the men who had loafed about the camp all day. They were in vicious humor. They fretted like children long shut in by the rain. They could not sit still in comfort, and their restlessness grew upon them as they waited for supper, and the movement of time was slow torture; and so they swore at one another and at the other men who were returning to the camp, and who seemed in but little better humor than themselves.

CHAPTER VII

IN A LOGGING CAMP (*Concluded*)

I SLEPT soundly that night, and was awakened in the morning by the mad clatter of an alarm-clock. It was about four o'clock. I could hear Fitz-Adams getting up in the little chamber which serves him as a sleeping-room and an office. He went below, and soon had the fires roaring fiercely in the kitchen and lobby; and I could hear him call to the women to get up and get breakfast. Next he appeared in the loft, and aroused the teamsters. In an incredibly short time they were dressed, and had lit their lanterns, and were gone to the stable to feed and tend their horses.

I got up with them, and was nearly dressed, when the boss reappeared in the loft. He walked down between the rows of beds, laying heavy hands here and there upon sleeping figures, and raising his voice to the call: "Come, roll out of this, you damn —— —— ——!" There was no ill-temper in his manner or tone; it was simply his habitual way of rousing the crew.

I was first at the run, first at the towels and comb, and was sitting in warm comfort behind the stove when the other men came shambling from the loft, their eyes blinking in the sudden light of the lobby.

We had beefsteak and potatoes and bread and coffee for breakfast. As soon as he had finished his meal, I went up to the boss to remind him of my existence, for he had in no way noticed me since Saturday night.

"You'll help the teamsters load bark, Buddy. Have you got any gloves?"

"No," I said.

"Then come this way." We went together to the office, and he spread before me a number of new pairs of heavy skin gloves.

"I don't know which will be best suited to the work that you want me to do," I said. "Won't you select a pair for me?"

"My advice to you, Buddy, is to wear them mits," and he pointed to a pair of white pigskin mittens. "They'll cost you seventy-five cents, which I'll charge to your wages."

There was a cot in the office, and a writing-desk, and in one corner a small stock of woodsmen's furnishing goods: boots, hats, overalls, and blanket-jackets, besides the gloves.

The boss locked the door behind us, and told

me to follow him. He carried a lantern, and lit the way to the stables.

Outside it was white and still, almost like a clear, quiet night in the snows of midwinter; for a heavy frost covered everything, and in the thin, unmoving air you could almost hear the crackling formation of frost-crystals. Into the darkness of the forest the stars shone with greater glory, and Orion was just sinking beyond the western mountain.

The four or five teamsters and Old Man Toler and I had gathered in front of the stable, where the bark-wagons stood in the open. These were strong vehicles, each with four massive wheels, and they supported wide-spreading frames within which three or more cords of bark could be loaded.

We "greased" the wagons by lantern-light, and then "hooked up" the horses. The wagon in the van was driven by "Black Bob." Fitz-Adams ordered Old Man Toler and me to go with that teamster and help him get on a load of bark.

Black Bob, muffled to the eyes in a long ulster which was bound about his waist with a piece of rope, stood erect on the loose boards that formed the floor of his wagon, and gathered up the reins, and then started his horses with a

ringing oath. Old Man Toler and I followed after, on foot, up a rocky road that had been newly cut to a point on the mountain where strips of hemlock-bark lay piled like cord-wood.

Black Bob swayed to the jolting of the wagon, but kept his balance with the ease of long habit, and swore a running accompaniment to the tugging of his team. He was the tallest man in the camp, almost a giant in height and in proportional development, and he owed his name to his blue-black hair and swarthy complexion. He was a native-born American, and, although he seemed never to discriminate among the other men on grounds of nationality, I thought that some of them did not like him because of a certain domineering manner he had.

He drew up now beside a pile of bark, and Toler and I placed a large stone under each hind wheel to relieve the pull on the horses.

It had been growing light as we climbed the mountain, and now we could see the sunlight on the topmost trees across the ravine.

Toler took up a position facing the bark-pile, with his back to the wagon. He began to pass swiftly the pieces of bark over his head and into the rigging, where Black Bob stood ready to load. I followed Toler's example, imitating

his movements as closely as I could, but was painfully aware of my awkwardness.

We had been but a few minutes at work when the boss came driving up behind us; as he turned out in order to pass, he called to me to come with him, and lend a hand at loading.

I had an uncomfortable premonition of the ordeal before me; why, I do not know, for the boss had treated me civilly so far; but I greatly wished to stay in the camp, and I much feared discharge.

The boss drove on for some distance, then branched off on a side-road, and having passed a number of bark-piles, finally turned around with great difficulty, and drew up, as Black Bob had done, beside a cord of bark.

I hastened to place a stone under a hind wheel, and then threw off my coat, and, getting in between the wagon and the pile, I began to pass the bark over my head, as I had learned to do from Toler.

The boss stood on the bottom of the rig, accepting listlessly the bark as I passed it, and tossing it carelessly into place. His whole manner was meant to convey to me the idea of my own inefficiency, as though he was ready to work, even anxious to get warmed up in the

frosty air, but my part was so slowly done that his own was reduced to child's play.

The storm brewed for a time in grim silence, but soon it broke into angry shouts of "Faster, faster, damn you!" and then the entire gamut of insults and excommunications.

I had been cursed at West Point, though in terms less hard to bear; and in expectation of the worst, I thought that I had schooled myself to take it philosophically when it came. But I had an awful moment now, for philosophy was clean gone, and in its place was a swift, mad desire to kill; and as the hot blood rushed to my brain, and tingled in my finger-tips, all that I could see for the instant were the handy stones under my feet, and the close range of Fitz-Adams's head.

I do not know what it was that saved me, unless it was the sight of Fitz-Adams flushed with the anger into which he lashed himself, and becoming the more ludicrously impotent in his rage, as I restrained my temper, and showed no sign of fear. Why he did not discharge me on the spot I do not know. With awful imprecations he kept urging me to faster and yet faster work. I quickened my clumsy pace to the swiftest that I could maintain with efficiency, and held it there, careless of his curses; and,

exhausted as I was, I yet had the satisfaction at the last of noting that our load was on as quickly as was Black Bob's.

And Fitz-Adams, too, found a curious balm for his troubled feelings. We were at the last cord, and he was cursing hard, while I panted and sweated in my straining efforts to pass the bark aboard. The strips were large and heavy, some of them, and they all lay rough side up; and as you lifted them over your head there fell upon you from each a shower of dust and dirt that had gathered in the crumbling outer bark. This filled your ears and hair, and found its way far down your back. I had blocked the wheel, but we were on a sharp descent, and the load was growing heavy. Evidently Fitz-Adams feared our breaking loose, and so he stopped me suddenly with an order to "make fast the lock-break." Now "the lock-break" conveyed the dimmest notion to my mind, and the boss would give no hint as to what it really was nor how it was to be "made fast;" instead, he stood and watched me, while, with awkward guesses as to its purpose, I succeeded in unhooking one end of a heavy chain that hung under the wagon, and having passed it between two spokes of a hind wheel, I clumsily made fast the hook in a link of the chain drawn taut.

Fitz-Adams stood, meanwhile, in speechless anger, enraged beyond relief from oaths; and then the tension broke, with comical effect, in a sentence which seemed to come to him as a happy inspiration:

"I'm damned, Buddy, if you ain't greener than a green Irishman; *greener than a green Irishman.*" He repeated the phrase as though it exactly met the case, and brought him satisfaction far beyond the power of profanity; and then he shouted through the forest:

"Hey, Bob!"

"Hello!"

"This Buddy, he's greener than a green Irishman!" and he laughed aloud, and there came an answering laugh from Bob; and the boss started down the mountain with his load, the locked wheel bounding and crunching among the stones, while he swore to steady the horses.

That was all of the loading for the morning, so Toler and I joined company. Toler had in charge the cutting of roads to the bark-piles, and I was to serve with him.

The piles were, some of them, in most inaccessible places. The hemlock-trees on that side of the mountain had first been felled, then the bark was cut round on the trunks at intervals of four feet. Next the bark was peeled off and

carefully heaped near by, while the trees themselves were trimmed and then sawed into logs of desired lengths, and these were "skidded" into piles. From the piles, in the spring, when the streams are high, the logs are sent by "skid ways" into the run, and, once in the water, the lumbermen use their finest skill in floating them to the market at Williamsport.

In the meanwhile the bark must be got out and carted to the tannery, and Toler and I had our work laid out in cutting ways for the wagons.

Supplied each with an axe, a cant-hook, and a grubbing-hoe, we began the work of cutting through the brushwood and clearing away the stumps, and laying rough bridges over the small streams.

I was delighted at my good fortune in being set to work under Toler. My respect for him grew steadily. An experience of nearly forty years as a woodsman had developed his natural gifts to the point of highest skill, and he had a marvellous instinct for directing a course through the maze of tangled undergrowth and logs and stumps which marked the ruins of the forest. I was soon lost, but he turned hither and thither, with the ready familiarity of a gamin to whom there are no intricacies in the East End. He had the inspiring air of knowing what he was

about, and the less common possession of actual knowledge, and he did his work in a masterly manner. "A workman that needeth not to be ashamed" constantly recurred to me as a phrase which aptly fitted him. And besides being a clever woodsman, Toler was clean of speech, that is, comparatively clean of speech — he swore, but his oaths were conventional and not usually of the blood-congealing kind of some of the other men.

That was a long morning's work, from earliest dawn until noon, and the ultimate advent of the dinner-hour was hugely welcome. Toler and I knocked off work at the sound of the noon whistle at the tannery four or five miles away. Only a few of us gathered at the camp. Fitz-Adams, with the other teamsters, and "Sam the Bookkeeper," who is also the camp carpenter, and Toler and I made up the number. The rest of the crew were too far in the mountains to return at midday, and "Tim the Blacksmith" drove off in the buckboard with a hot dinner for them.

The first work of the afternoon was to help the teamsters get on a second load of bark. Again the boss forced me to his aid, and cursed me as he had done before, only I thought that he had been drinking, and there was certainly an added viciousness in his oaths, and in the

threats of sudden death. But I had the consolation now of knowing that, as soon as the load was on, I should work with Toler for the rest of the day. Toler did not curse me, although it was impossible for him to wholly conceal the slender regard in which he held a man who never before had seen a grubbing-hoe, nor a cant-hook, and who handled an axe about as effectively as a girl throws a stone, and to whom the woods were a hopeless labyrinth. But Toler had the instincts of a gentleman; for all his want of respect for a man so ignorant as I, it was clear that there was not a little patient compassion in the feeling which he bore me, and he was at pains to teach me, and he eagerly encouraged any sign of improvement on my part.

But this time I was not done with Fitz-Adams when the afternoon's load was on. Toler and I soon needed a crowbar, and he sent me to fetch one from the blacksmith's shop.

Near the shop there is a depression in the road, and there the soil is somewhat soft. Much noise was coming from that quarter; and as I neared it I could see that Black Bob's wheels were fast in the mud, and that the boss's load was drawn close up behind and blocked.

Black Bob was on the ground beside his team, his reins in hand, and with frantic oaths he was

urging his horses to their utmost strength. Fitz-Adams stood by and watched; but at sight of the weakening brutes, he quickly unbolted his own whiffle-trees, and driving his team ahead, made fast to the tongue of Black Bob's wagon. Then both together they started up their horses, lashing them with the far-reaching leather thongs that swung from the short stocks which they carried, and joining in a chorus of furious curses. Slowly the great wheels began to rise from the deep grooves in which they had settled; but in another minute, as the strength of the horses failed, the wheels sunk surely back again. Fitz-Adams was beside himself with rage, and at that moment he caught sight of me.

"What are you doing here?" he shouted with an oath.

"Toler sent me for a crowbar."

"He did, did he? Then I'll send you to hell!" and with that he seized an axe which lay near, and swinging it above his head, he rushed at me. It was a menacing figure that he made, with the axe held aloft by his giant arms, his eyes flashing, and his nostrils dilating with the childish passion which mastered him; but he was as harmless as a child at any show of fearlessness, and there was the oddest anticlimax in his mild command to "get that damn crowbar and hurry

back to Toler," which I was glad enough to do; for my part was a mere pretence of courage; in reality I felt scared out of a year's growth, and my legs were trembling violently.

Through the following days there was little variation for Toler and me in the programme of work. We loaded bark until the teamsters were off, and then cut ways to the piles.

There is, however, an incident of Tuesday morning which will linger in my memory. It was the fulfilment of Dick the Kid's prophecy. I heard a man swear.

The boss anticipated the usual time of the morning cursing, and gave me an initial one that day in the dark in front of the stables, while the teamsters stood by with their lanterns in hand, and listened critically with sober faces, as though they were determining, with a nice sense of the possible, whether Fitz-Adams was doing himself justice. At the last he turned to them:

"Will I kill him now, or let him live one day more?"

"Let the damn dog live," came from Black Bob.

"Then you'll take him," said the boss, "and dray out that bark." So Black Bob and I set off in company.

I was not a little perplexed by the puerility

of Fitz-Adams's rage. It seemed singularly out of keeping with the sturdy manliness of the fellow. If he wished to get rid of me, why did he not discharge me? I began to suspect that the cause lay in tenderness of heart, of which he was secretly ashamed. To him I was *avis rara* in a lumber-camp. No doubt he thought me some hitherto unknown species of immigrant; and being too tender-hearted to assume the responsibility of turning me adrift, he hoped to frighten me away. Black Bob soon puzzled me almost as much. He was driving the dray, which is a rude, low sledge, used to draw out bark from points that are inaccessible to the wagons. We were walking together at the side of the road, and neither of us spoke. Presently Bob stopped his horses to give them breath, and then he turned to me. His speech was halting, and there was an uncomfortable, apologetic quality in his voice, but the feeling was evidently sincere. To my surprise he was bidding me, with utmost kindness, not to mind Fitz-Adams's curses, and he added that the boss meant nothing by them, that he really knew no better. It seemed to me an act of truest friendliness on Black Bob's part, involving charity and moral courage of high order, and I was far more grateful than my acknowledgment implied. It produced a comfort-

able elation, which lasted while we got on a towering load of bark in silence in the earliest dawn, and started for the road. We had almost reached it, and the horses were pulling hard, when, with the suddenness of a pistol-shot, the dray came sharply against the stump of a stub-born sapling that rose unseen in the way, and in an instant the horses were plunging forward in broken harness, and half the load was sliding gently to the ground.

Black Bob brought the horses to a stand, and then stood still himself. I was filled with admiration for his self-control, for I dreamt that he was making a successful effort to restrain himself. In reality he was summoning all his powers; and in another moment, with face uplifted to the pale stars, he broke forth in blasphemies so hellish, that for the next full minute I might have been listening to the outcries of a tormented fiend, held tight in the grip of remorseless agony.

Thursday morning brought the crisis in the history of my stay in camp. In the course of the midday cursing of the day before, Fitz-Adams told me that he was giving me my last chance. I tried hard to show my fitness for the place, and our load was the first to start for the tannery; but to all appearances Fitz-Adams

was not placated. I thought that the last hour of my stay in camp was surely come, and with a heavy heart I began to plan the next move. But for some reason nothing further was said to me about leaving, and Thursday morning found me again helping the boss.

His mood had strangely changed; it was very early, and the skies were overcast, and in the clouded twilight we could scarcely see to do our work. Fitz-Adams seemed to be in no hurry; he was silent, and moved nervously. I wondered what this might portend, and braced myself for finality. It was very hard. I was learning to know the men; they ignored me still, but I was sure that I understood them better, and my liking for them grew each day, and earnestly I wished to stay, in the hope of winning a footing in the camp, and some terms of fellowship with the men.

Fitz-Adams had stopped working now, and he stood leaning on the rigging as he spoke to me. There was a mildness in his tone and a tentative expectancy, as though an uncomfortable suspicion had dawned upon him, and he feared to verify it.

"Say, Buddy, have you ever been to school?"

"Yes," I said.

There was silence for a minute, and the tone in which Fitz-Adams broke it was awestruck.

"Say, Buddy, have you got a education?"

"I've had good advantages."

And then eagerly from him:

"Major, can you figure?"

It was my inning now, and I liked it, and I was guilty of saying that, within narrow limits, I could.

"Will you do my accounts for me, Major?"

"I will, with pleasure."

Fitz-Adams drew a deep breath, and his voice fell to a lower tone.

"Well, that'll be a good thing for me. I never had no schooling, and Sam the Book-keeper, he don't seem to know much more'n me. I guess I lost pretty nigh on to two thousand dollars on my contracts last year, on account of not knowing how to figure. Say, Major, this is pretty hard work for you; you suit yourself about this work, and help me with the accounts. Of course, I—I—I—didn't know——"

"Oh, drop it, Fitz-Adams!" I said. "We understand each other. I'll be glad to look after the accounts as long as I stay; but it's growing light now, and let's get on this load."

And so I won a place in the camp, and got myself on human terms with the boss. Fitz-Adams never referred to the matter again, but treated me in a perfectly manly, straightforward

way, taking patiently my clumsy work as a woodsman, and accepting, as a matter of course, my help with the accounts, and even consulting me, at times, in certain details of the work. It was one of these consultations which brought a rare opportunity.

I had won my way with the boss, not by virtue of an education, but actually upon the basis of an acquaintance with elementary arithmetic. When I came to look at the accounts, it was not a question of book-keeping that was involved, but simple addition and multiplication and division, in all of which branches both Fitz-Adams and Sam the Book-keeper were lamentably weak, so weak, in fact, that they felt no real confidence in their results.

But my way with the men was yet to make. They were not uncivil, but they would none of me. To them I was still an outsider, "an inharmonious figure in their club," and, whatever may have been the change in my relations with the boss, the men were in no way bound to recognize me.

One morning Fitz-Adams and I stood together in his rig, as he was driving up the "corduroy road" to the place on the mountain where the crew were at work. Presently he pointed out to me, about forty yards up the steep ascent no

our left, some long, straggling piles of bark that perched there, like peasants' huts over a precipice in the Alps.

"I don't know how to go at that bark," he said with a frown. "You can't get a wagon there, nor yet a dray; and it's so brittle that if you slide it down, you'll have nothing but chips to cart to the tannery, and the man that tries to carry it down—well, it's a three or four days' job, and he'll have his neck broke sure."

I said that I would look at it. I was "piling bark" now on my own account, and Toler had another "Buddy," a big, bouncing Irish Hercules, who had lately come to camp, and who soon won distinction by reason of the songs he sung. They were wonderful songs; long beyond belief, and they told the loves and woes of truly wonderful people.

Buddy had early made known his talent, and on his first evening in camp he was peremptorily told to sing. It was after supper. He was sitting, much at home, on the bench behind the stove, and was smoking. Instantly he took his pipe from his mouth, and cleared his throat; then, laying his hands on his knees, he sang, swaying meanwhile in time with the monotonous cadences of that strange verse, which went on and on and on for quite half an hour,

while the men listened open-eyed, and punctuated the sentiment with profane approval.

When I examined the bark-piles I found that transferring them to the "corduroy road" below was a matter of carrying the bark in small loads on one's back, and of having a secure footing for the descent.

On the next morning I took a pick and spade, and first cut a series of steps to the ledge where the bark lay piled. After a little practice, I learned to make up a load, by selecting a broad, stout slab of bark and packing the smaller pieces upon it. Then stooping under the load, as it lay ready on the edge of a pile, I easily shifted it to my back and head; and holding it with one hand, while the other was free to help maintain my balance, I carefully picked a way down the steep decline.

It probably appeared a far more difficult and dangerous feat than it really was; and with a load of bark upon my back, I was more than ever an outlandish figure to the men, more in keeping with the Königsstuhl and the valley of the Neckar than with Fitz-Adams's Camp in the Alleghanies. But the actual accomplishment of the work seemed to interest them, and the teamsters used to stop and watch me in silence, and then drive off, swearing in low tones.

One evening the whole returning crew caught me at the job. The men stood still, and having watched a descent, they examined the bark piled high at the roadside, and then walked on, commenting among themselves. That night in Camp several of them spoke to me, calling me "Major" after Fitz-Adams's manner.

It was the beginning of more personal acquaintance with the men. I can but like them. In the fortnight and more of my stay I cannot lay claim to having got on intimate terms with them. But they seem to me a truthful, high-spirited, hard-working, generous set of men. They swear like fiends incarnate, and when they can, they drink, and they all have "rogued and ranged in their time." On grounds of high morality there is no possible justification for them. But these are men who were born and bred to vicious living; and the wonder is not that they are bad, but that in all their blasting departure from the good, there yet survives in them the vital power of return.

There is Old Man Toler. He is certainly an exception in point of birth and earliest breeding, but he has been in the lumber business more or less, he tells me, since he was a boy of fourteen. There was one important period taken out, when, as a young man, he enlisted, and served in the

Army of the Potomac, from the spring of 1862 until the end of the Civil War. He is native-born, and has the intelligent patriotism of a true American. In our walks together to and from our work, I delighted in his talk about the war period in his life. His perspective as a private soldier was so true, so thoroughly free from the towering obtrusion of his own experiences. These were almost lost in his absorbing interest in the working out of great events. He knew the war thoroughly from the point of view of the army. He knew the service, and had borne his part in hardship and in action with a distinct sense of personal responsibility to the subject and aim of it all. This was luminous in what he said, and never from his declaration of it, but in the absence of such declaration, and in the loss of self in the large action of which he felt himself a part.

There was much in Toler that rang true, and I regretted the more that he evidently preferred to talk little about himself, and almost never of his personal views. My wonder at his being a common hand in camp grew, until one day, in talking with Black Bob, I learned a reason. Black Bob, quite of his own accord, had instituted a series of comparisons among the men.

"There's Fitz-Adams and his brother," he

was saying, "they're about as good a pair of lumbermen as you'll find. But they ain't the best in this camp. There's a man here that knows more about this business than any three other men, and that's Old Man Toler. His father was a big lumberman before him, and Toler was brought up thorough to the work, and he's had many a camp of his own, and made lots of money in his time. But he ain't ever kept none, and he never will." And Black Bob winked significantly, and ostentatiously wiped his mouth.

There is an "old soldier" of quite another type in camp. It is Sam the Book-keeper. Work on the accounts has brought me into close relations with Sam. He is a large, good-humored, fair-haired and ruddy-faced American, who by no means shows his more than fifty years. It is pathetic to watch his struggles with the lines of figures, as he tries to add them up; and the situation is really serious, for almost never can he get the same result twice.

He and I were working one evening in the office, and had straightened matters out to a certain point. Sam was in high spirits as a result. He wished to talk. There was a handy explanation of his ignorance of figures, and he wanted me to know it. He chiefly played truant from

school, he said, when he was a boy at home on his father's farm; and at the age of eleven he ran away for good, allured by the fascination of life on a canal-boat; and ever since that time he had shifted for himself.

And now Sam was fairly started in his history; but the narrative leaped suddenly to his career as a soldier. His war experiences included the battle of Bull Run and the capture of Savannah. Sam's knowledge of campaigns was not exhaustive, and his most vivid memories of historic events were all of a personal nature, which is certainly not unnatural.

From his own frank statement, he seems to have been among the first to leave the field at Bull Run. With another member of his company he reached Washington, rather worn and dusty, but really none the worse for a cross-country sprint.

Once in the city, they were soon hailed by an acquaintance, who took them in hand with the remark that "he knew just the thing for them."

They were simply to follow him to Pennsylvania Avenue, and obey his directions. His first was that they should limp, and they limped; and he led them, limping, to certain rooms on the avenue, where thoughtful preparation had been made for the care of the wounded. Here they

were received with marked attention, and after having been asked as to whether they were "just from the front," and to which regiment they belonged, they were put in the care of certain volunteer nurses. These ladies, with their own hands, bared the soldiers' feet, and washed them, and then dressed them in clean socks and comfortable slippers, which the men were to wear until quite well again. At this refuge Sam and his companion, and many another soldier "from the front," were given bed and board as long as they found it convenient to remain.

With cheerful appreciation of the humor of it, Sam described the labored way in which his partner and he would limp down the avenue each morning, until they had turned a corner; and then, instantly restored to perfect soundness, they would make for the nearest saloon. They played this game until their cash was gone; then they felt compelled to rejoin their regiment, which was encamped near Arlington.

That was the beginning of Sam's career as a soldier. It ended at Savannah. After the capture of the city, and as General Sherman's army was setting out on the march to Richmond, Sam found himself one of a squad ordered to remain behind, for the purpose of assisting the United States Excise Officers.

The men had quarters in a large stone building, which was given over entirely to their use. The work was much to their taste. Every day they shrewdly searched the city for contraband liquor, and not infrequently they unearthed a den where kegs of whiskey were concealed. Some of these they always smuggled to their own quarters, and the rest they handed over to the excise officers. Orgies that were fired with unfailing rum consumed the greater part of every night, and formed an epoch in Sam's history upon which he reflects with lasting satisfaction.

Most of the men in camp are younger than Old Man Toler and Sam the Book-keeper, and of the younger set I have made the acquaintance of "Long-nosed Harry." Harry is barely thirty and already a man of considerable experience. When fairly started, he can tell capital tales of how he has "beat his way" on long journeys through the country, and of narrow escapes from the "cops," and of other occasions when he has not escaped. Wherever in this country the railways have penetrated, Harry seems to have gone, and he has gathered on his wanderings a fund of curious information, as though there were a nether side of things, and he had grown familiar with that in contrast with the surface that is exposed to the eye of the ordinary traveller.

Harry's face confirms his account of a career not unfamiliar with the police. A long thin face it is, with small dark eyes set close together, a narrow, thin-lipped mouth, a receding chin, and an abnormally long nose, which has gained nothing in point of beauty by having been broken in a fight with a negro at Atlantic City.

He is of glib speech, and he has at command a long repertory of songs of the vaudeville variety, and this enhances his standing among the men. Besides, Harry can read aloud, as I learned one day when a stray newspaper found its way into the camp. He read with a certain swift readiness that held your interest, and you soon grew excited in an effort to recognize old acquaintances in the strangely accented longer words, which were plainly unintelligible to Harry and his hearers, while yet the general sense of what was read was obviously clear.

Harry and I sat talking together one Sunday evening. We had a corner of the lobby to ourselves. Suddenly, without apparent connection with what we had been saying, he gave me one of those rare confidences which reveal, as by a flash of supernatural light, the very heart of a man's life, and then leave you awed and speechless, in the presence of eternal verities.

It was a fragment of personal history, very

short, and it was told with the directness and simplicity of truth itself. He had been married six years before. His wife was a delicate girl who lived for only two years after Harry married her. He was a brakeman on a freight-train then. He used to look forward to his "off-day" with a feeling, he said, that "made life worth living." And they were convenient, too, those "off-days"; for in them he did the washing, and the scrubbing, and whatever else of accumulated housework he could spare his wife. But she died. And there was nothing more in life for Harry; so he drifted back into the old way, the way of all the men, a life of alternate work and debauch.

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"Karl the Swede" is the only Scandinavian in the crew, which, like the other gangs of workmen which I have known, is exceedingly heterogeneous in character. There is nothing remarkable about Karl. He is a fair-haired, blue-eyed, stocky youth of one-and-twenty, and as hard-drinking, hard-working a woodsman as any of them. But Karl happens to be the only man who, during my stay in camp, has met with an accident. It was yesterday morning. The men were trimming logs, and "skidding" them at a point on the mountain a mile or more from camp,

and I was piling bark not far from the "skid-ways." At a little before noon I heard the buck-board go jolting over the bowlders on the mountain-road; and a few minutes later there rang through the forest Fitz-Adams's call to dinner.

I set out for the nearest skid-way, where the men were gathering, when suddenly I came upon Karl lying at length in a clump of myrtle, with one foot extended upon a rock, and bare, except for a woollen sock that was bound tightly around the instep. What had happened was clear in an instant. The sock was saturated with blood, and a dark, clotted stream stained the foot, and a pool of blood had formed on the surface of the rock. I sat down beside him, and Karl first showed me in his boot a clean cut three inches long, where the axe-blade had entered. Then he unrapped the sock, and lifting from the wound a quid of pulpy tobacco, he exposed a gash where the skin and shallow flesh lay open to the bone. The flow of blood had nearly ceased, for the tobacco had acted as a styptic; and Karl quickly reapplied it, and again bound the wound tightly with his sock.

All the while he acted in a perfectly impersonal manner, as though he were in no way directly concerned in the accident, which was simply a phenomenon of common interest to us

both. He betrayed no trace of suffering nor even of annoyance at the discomfort of the mishap; and soon he began to speak of it, in his broken English, with like impersonality.

"Fitz-Adams, you know, would take him to camp in the buckboard after dinner, and would see that he got safe to English Centre, where the doctor would dress the wound. That would do very well until he reached Williamsport; but he must go to Williamsport, and that was the worst of it; for it would be several weeks before he could get back to camp, and then, between drunks and the doctor's bills, his savings would be all gone."

This taken-for-granted attitude toward riotous living is strikingly characteristic. I have noticed it repeatedly among the men. They speak of past and prospective debauches with the *naïveté* of callow undergraduates, except that among the lumbermen there is no sense of credit or distinction attaching to vice; it is simply inherent in the order of things. This is by no means a professed creed. Profession, when there is any, is all in the other direction, and is of the nature of the "homage that vice pays to virtue." It is simply in the natural and unpremeditated speech and action of the men that you detect this attitude of mind.

The time spent at the camp is, in one aspect of it, a course of training, a cumulative storage of energy, financial and physical, against a future expenditure in the sudden outburst of a grand carouse.

It has been interesting to notice what have appeared to be the instinctive precautions of the men. There seems to be an established custom of great strength that prohibits the keeping of spirits in camp. And gambling is strangely infrequent. I have heard hints of memorable epochs, when, like an epidemic, gambling has swept the camp with fearful force, and there is a wholesome fear of its return. I was struck with this one night, when, without apparent warning, the customary "High, Low, Jack and the Game" gave place to poker, and an excited crowd stood round the table and watched; and Fitz-Adams had to go up to the office to bring down wages due to the players. But the outbreak spent itself without becoming epidemic this time, and you could feel the relief among the men when "Phil the Farmer" and "Irish Mike" agreed to stand their loss of about ten dollars each, and not continue the game.

"High, Low, Jack" is invariable after supper, and lends itself with singular sociability to the pleasure of the men. There is but one

pack of cards, and only one table in the lobby. A four-handed game is begun immediately after supper, the opposite men playing partners. A game is not long; and at its end the beaten partners give place to a new pair, and this course continues until all the members of the crew have had a hand.

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In looking over this chapter I see that I have drawn a very inadequate picture of Fitz-Adams. A hard swearer he certainly is, but Black Bob was right in assuring me that there is more ignorance than malice in his habitual maledictions.

First of all, Fitz-Adams is an admirable workman. To any department of the work of lumbermen he can lend a hand of highest efficiency. And his, in a marked degree, are the manual skill and resourceful ingenuity which are characteristic of the men. Only Fitz-Adams is exceptional in these particulars, like Old Man Toler. With them this manual skill, for instance, is like the sure touch of a master handicraftsman.

One morning, while at work with Old Man Toler, I openly admired his handling of an axe. Toler was standing on a log which obstructed

our way, and which he was about to cut in two. He drew the axe-blade up the side of the log between his feet. "Do you see that scratch?" he said, and then he swung the axe above his head, and brought it down with a sweeping stroke. The blade entered the bark exactly where the scratch had been. Five times running, Toler performed this feat, never missing his mark by the fraction of an inch, and then he turned to me. "I've used an axe so long, Buddy," he said, "that I can split hairs with a good one now."

But even more than a thorough woodsman, Fitz-Adams is a superb overseer. Under his shrewd foresight and direction, the whole work of the crew is urged forward with resistless energy. He knows exactly what each man is doing, and whether or not the work is well done.

His planning of the work and his effective organizing and directing toward its accomplishment are, no doubt, his strongest points; but dramatically considered, although he is perfectly unconscious of the effect, he shows to greatest advantage when he is personally leading the crew in an attack upon a difficult situation. All his powers are well in evidence then, and not least of all his power of speech. You have

actual sight at such times of one of Carlyle's heroes, a "captain of industry," to whom there are no insurmountable difficulties, no "impossibilities," but who brings order out of chaos, by the sheer force of indomitable energy.

With this high efficiency his ignorance is in striking contrast. He can write his name, and there his educational equipment ends. His helplessness in the presence of figures is as pathetic and quite as serious as is Sam the Book-keeper's. But Fitz-Adams is a young man, barely thirty, I should say. Almost his earliest memory is that of being a mule-driver in one of the mines near Wilkesbarre. From this he went to picking slate in a breaker. Now he is a jobber, employing a large crew, and undertaking contracts which involve considerable sums of money. There has been offered to him, and it is still open, the position of overseer in a far larger enterprise than his own, where, personally, he would run none of the business risk; but he has confided to me that he does not dare to accept the place owing to his lack of even elementary education. In this connection he once asked me whether I thought that he might yet go to school. I did think so with emphasis, and I gave him so many reasons for this opinion, and

cited so many examples of men as old as he and older who were at school, that he really warmed to it as a practicable plan.

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The rain stopped hours ago, and it is turning very cold, and snow has begun to fall. Fitz-Adams got back from English Centre long before dinner, and there is evidence that he has not been drinking. I have consulted him on the matter of leaving, and he has urged me to stay, and has offered me permanent employment; but he says that, if I must be off, and am bent on going westward, I would better get as far as Hoytville as soon as possible, else I may run the risk of encountering roads blocked with snow. Then, for the first time, he introduced the subject of wages, and asked me what I thought was "right." I said that before coming to the camp, I had worked for a farmer, and had been given seventy-five cents a day and my keep; and I added that, if this rate of wage seemed fair to him, it would suit me perfectly. He agreed at once, and now I am a capitalist. Soon I shall set out for Hoytville, which is, I judge, a matter of two or three hours' walk from here. Fitz-Adams has given me careful directions about the road, and has shown the deep-

est interest in my plan of getting West, and has urged me to write to him.

The crew are all gone to work, and I shall not see them. They were off as soon as the storm slackened. All were keen to go, and so be spared the misery of a day of enforced idleness, all except "Old Pete," and he is past being keen. He is over sixty, and has a strongly marked Celtic face, deeply furrowed with the lines of age and pain. He works with the crew, but in camp he sits alone on the bench opposite the stove, with the overalls and shirts hanging over him. When not at work he sits there hour after hour, his large, muscular frame bent forward, and his elbows resting on his knees, and there he endures, in the dumb agony of animal pain, the torment of rheumatism in his legs. He seldom speaks, and never of his sufferings—only sometimes in comically sententious response to something that has interested him. And the men let him alone, knowing by a true intuition that he prefers it so.

After the rain let up I happened to pass through the lobby as the men were starting for their work. Old Pete was the last to move. I watched him rising slowly to his feet. In spite of him, his face drew the picture of the hideous pain he bore, but through it shone the clear

courage of a man, and his eyes reflected the grim humor of a thought that touched his native sense, and he smiled as he said:

"We don't have to work; we can starve."

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I have spent three Sundays in the woods. On the first I fled cravenly into the forest, hugging a book from out my pack, and the hours flew swiftly along the pages. The second Sunday was another glorious autumn day. By that time I had won a modest place in camp, and could hold up my head with due respect among the men. I asked several of them whether there was any church service at English Centre. They thought that there was, but they would take no stock at all in my plan of discovery.

Alone I set out for the village. There was perfect quiet in the mountains, no sound of axe or saw, nor crash of falling trees, nor rumble of bark-wagons; only the tuneful flow and splash of the run, which caught the living sunlight, and flashed it back in radiance through the flushing air, that quivered in the ecstasy of buoyant life. The fire of life flamed in the glowing hues of autumn, and burned with white heat in the hoar-frost which clung to the shaded crevices in the rocks, and along the blades of seared grass, and on the fringe of fallen leaves. And I was free,

as free and careless as the mountain-stream, and before me was a blessed day of rest!

Every foot of the road was strangely familiar, but the familiarity lay in an intimate association with some distant past, as of earliest childhood. There was the camp by the dam, and there the Irishman's cabin, where the cow was still munching straw, and the sow wallowing in the mire. Then I came to the fork in the road, where one way led to Wolf Run. It was a lifetime since I had gone up that way, feeling as cocky as a wedding-guest, and soon had come down again "a sadder and a wiser man." I felt like another Rip Van Winkle as I re-entered the village, but the marvel lay in there being no change at all, except in the Sunday calm which now possessed the place.

The post-office is in a private house, and I knocked in some uncertainty of being able to get my letters; but the postmistress gave them to me with obliging readiness, and with them a cordial invitation to attend the Sunday-school, which, she said, was the only service of that morning. Her invitation was more welcome than she knew, for it was the first of its kind to reach me as a proletaire.

I read my letters, and then went to the church, which stands at the end of the village street.

The service was beginning. As superintendent the postmistress was in charge. There were no men present. About thirty women and girls, and half a dozen boys, made up the school. The conduct of the service I thought intensely interesting. The superintendent was entirely at home in her place, and she valued the opportunity.

When the classes grouped themselves for the study of the lesson, a teacher was lacking. I was asked to take the place, and was startled at finding myself in charge of a class of village belles. What their feeling toward the arrangement was, I could only guess; but it was clear that they were not accustomed to being taught by an unshaven, unshorn woodsman, in rough clothes, and boots covered with patches. But the lesson was in my favor; it was the incident of the washing of the disciples' feet at the last Passover. I soon forgot my embarrassment in the interest of the text, and in an atmosphere of serious study.

Last Sunday I went again to the Sunday-school, and I had my former class to teach. Some preparation had been possible during the week, and the hour passed successfully. Among the announcements was one of a prayer-meeting to be held that night.

I reached the church at the hour of the evening service. I opened the door, and there sat a crowded congregation in waiting. The back seats on both sides of the aisle were solid ranks of men, lumbermen, and teamsters, and tannery hands, many of them in their working-clothes. There were women and children scattered through the pews farther up, and some boys had overflowed upon the pulpit steps, but most of the company were men.

There was no one in the minister's seat, but the postmistress was in place at the organ, and as I entered, she nodded to me in evident expectation of my joining her. I walked forward, and she stepped out into the aisle to meet me.

"It's time to begin," she said, quietly.

"Is your minister not come yet?" I asked.

"Oh, you're going to speak to-night, you know."

I did not know. For an instant I knew only that there was a cold, hard grip upon my heart which seemed to hold it still, and that in my brain there had begun a mad dance of all that I ever thought I knew. But from out the turmoil a sane thought emerged: "This is a company of working-people who are come to hear a fellow-workman speak to them about our deep-

est needs." In another moment I was cooler, and a strange, unreasoning peace ensued.

I asked the postmistress to select some hymns. She handed me a list, chosen with perfect knowledge of those which the congregation most enjoyed. The people were soon singing, thinly at first; but the familiar melody spread, and carried with it a sense of solidarity, in which self was merged and lost, and the swelling sound rolled on, deepening with the voices of the men. Soon it recalled college-chapel, with the students in a mood to sing, and "Ein' Feste Burg" mounting in the majesty of that deep-toned hymn, until the vaulted ceilings rock, and the archangels above the chancel seem to join in the splendid volume of high praise!

But more helpful to me than the singing was the sight of familiar faces. Black Bob stood towering like another Saul above the mass of men; and at his side was one of our teamsters who lives in the village, and with whom I had often loaded bark. Near the door—I was not quite sure at first, but there could be no mistake—near the door was Fitz-Adams, and not far from him Long-nosed Harry and Phil the Farmer stood together.

I was trembling when I began to speak, trembling with awful fear, a fear that was yet a sol-

emn joy; for I had vision then of human hearts hungering to be fed, and, as a sharer in their need, I knew that it was given to me to point them to the Bread of Life.

I could speak to them now, for with greater clearness I could see these fellow-workers as they were—strong, brave men who win the mastery which comes to those who clear the way for progress, giving play, in their natural living, to the forces which make men free, and growing strong in heart and in the will to do, as they grow strong of arm and catch the rough cunning of their trade; men of many races, yet meeting on the common ground of men all free and under equal chance to make their way; knowing no differences but those of personality, and winning their places in the crew, each man according to his kind, and his rewards according to his skill.

Such were they in their outward lives, the physical life within them growing in living ways, and making them the true, efficient workmen that they were. But of the inner life that makes us men, that life wherein we act from choice, and must "give account of the deeds done in the body," that range of action which we call moral, where conscience speaks to us in words of command, there they knew no mastery at

all, and, least of all, the mastery of the moralist.

To them God was a moral ruler, dwelling afar from the daily life of men, and righteousness was a slavish obedience to His laws, and religion a mystic somewhat which was good for women and children and weak men.

And yet deep in their own hearts was their supremest need. Life as they knew it brought to them no satisfaction for its craving want. It was not so in other things; they knew their work; and in the overcoming of its difficulties, they had felt the fierce joy of conquest. But confronted with temptations, the difficulties of their inner life, there they had no strength; and lust and passion mastered them, and left their real desire unsatisfied. Here, in respect of mastery, they were slaves, and as regards life, they were dead, having only the need of life.

There, then, was their want; it was for Life, abundant, victorious Life.

And now I could speak to them of God; of Him "who is not far from every one of us, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being;" the living God who reveals Himself in all life, and who became incarnate in the Son of Man, and who speaks to us in human words which go straight to our seeking hearts: "I am the way,

the truth, and the life." "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." "The words that I speak unto you, they are life."

"Strong Son of God!" whose living words quicken us from the death of sin and set us free. By whose grace we are "renewed in the whole man after His image, and enabled, more and more, to die unto sin and live unto righteousness." Who was "made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness." Whose death was not a reconcilement of God to us, but was "God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Whose Gospel is the glad tidings of this reconciliation, and we are become "ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

And then we prayed, confessing our sinful state, our bondage, our death in sin, and pleading that we might be "transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we might prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

Now that I am on the eve of leaving Fitz-Adams's Camp, I cannot hide from myself my eagerness to go. I have real regrets; for while two weeks and as many days do not constitute a long period, yet time is purely relative, and I shall have a livelier memory of the camp and of certain of the men, and a keener interest in them, than I have for places and men with whom my association has been much longer.

But of the feelings of which I am conscious at leaving, I am surprised at the intensity of the longing to know what has happened during the three weeks, nearly, since I have seen a newspaper from the great world. I thought little of it as the days passed, but now I am all aglow with desire for news about the progress of the campaigns in New York and Massachusetts and Ohio. And then the last word from abroad had piqued one's curiosity to the utmost as to possible results. Mr. Smith, the leader of the House of Commons, I know is dead; and as I was leaving Williamsport for the woods, I saw upon the bulletin-boards the announcement of Mr. Parnell's sudden death; but of the political effect of these events no word has reached me. Has Mr. Balfour or Mr. Goschen succeeded to the leadership of the House? And if Mr. Balfour became the First Lord of the Treasury, does

he retain the Chief Secretaryship for Ireland? And has the death of Mr. Parnell brought about a reunion between Parnellites and M'Carthyites, or is the breach as hopeless as ever?

It will be intensely interesting to find answers to these questions and to many more; but after all I am sincerely sorry to leave the camp, and as I go up now to say good-by to Fitz-Adams, who is in his office, it is with the knowledge that I am parting from a man whom it is an inspiration to have known.